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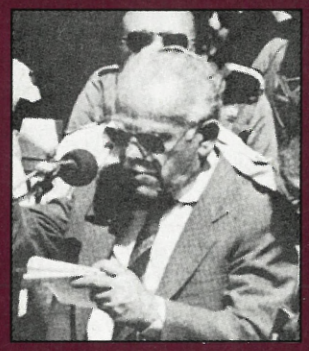
AN INTERNATIONAL PALESTINIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE

THE RETURN

Shamir's Elections Plan and the Carrot-and-Stick Game
by Raphael Calis



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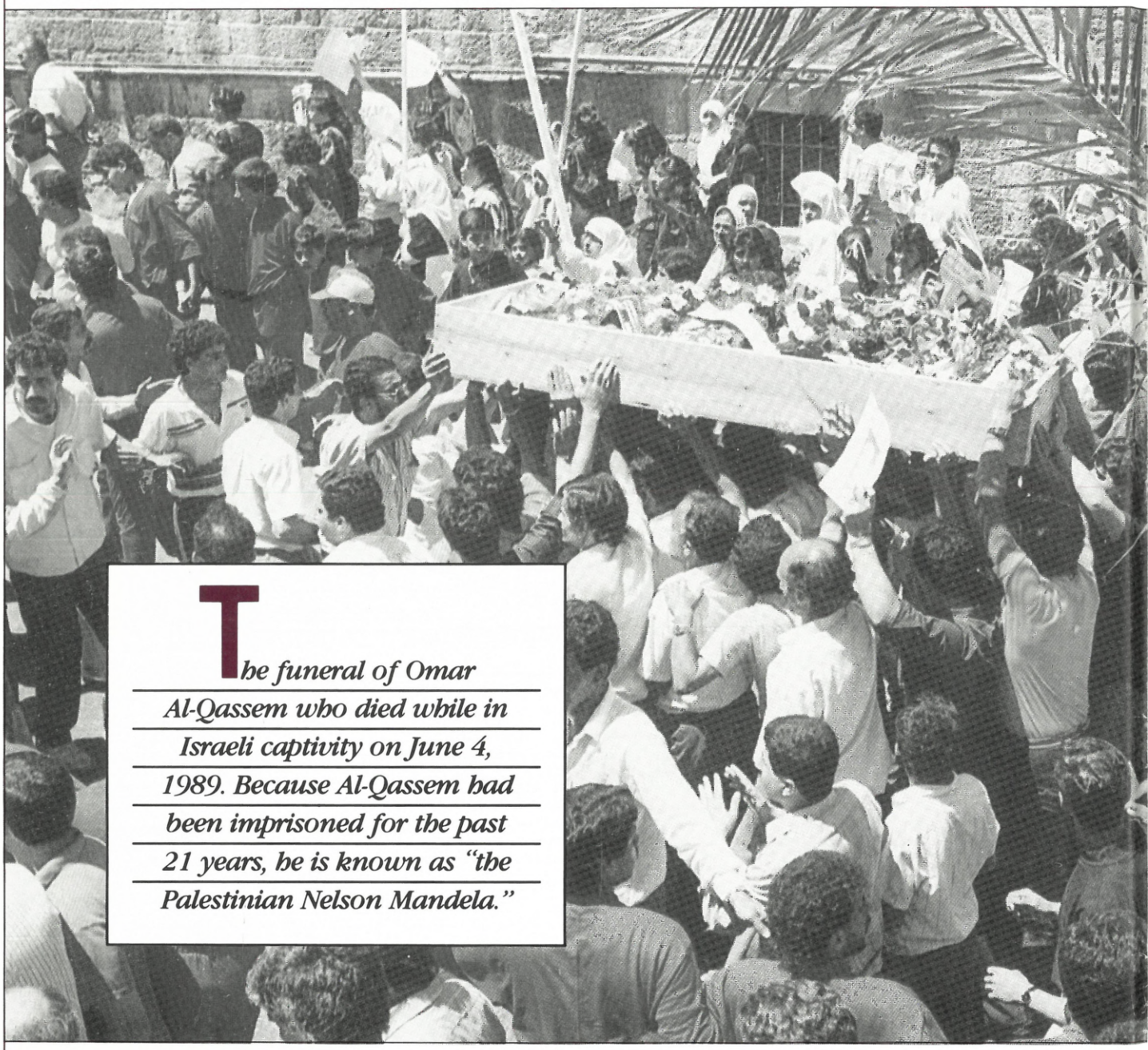

The funeral of Omar Al-Qassem who died while in Israeli captivity on June 4, 1989. Because Al-Qassem had been imprisoned for the past 21 years, he is known as "the Palestinian Nelson Mandela."

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CONTENTS

2 Editorial—Shamir Scuttles His Own Elections Plan

4 A Letter to Mutawakel Taha: A Palestinian Political Prisoner
by Raymonda Hawa Tawil

6 Shamir's Elections Plan and the Carrot-and-Stick Game
by Raphael Calis

8 An International Peace Conference is the Best Vehicle to Solve the Palestine Question
by Izzat I. Ghurani

11 What Makes the *Intifadah* a Success?
by Nabila Qaddoumi

13 The *Intifadah* and its Leadership
by Ziad Abu Amr

18 *Ha-Sicarikim*: Israel's Newest Terror Group
by Pinhas 'Anbari

20 Settler Violence on the West Bank—With Israeli Government Approval
by Emile Siman

23 Does Britain Matter When it Comes to the Middle East?
by Jane Hunter

27 In Brief

30 The Right of Return: A Matter of Heart and Mind
by Lesley C. Abu Khater

34 When Parenting Becomes a Moral Minefield: Palestinian Parents Struggle to Guide "The Children of the Stones"
by Kate B. Rouhana

38 Digging Up New Wounds Under the *Haram Al-Sharif*
by Kate Casa

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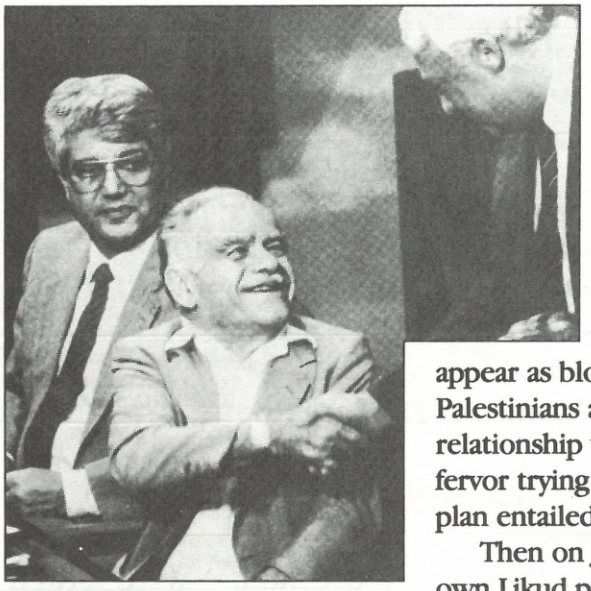
EDITORIAL

Shamir Scuttles His Own Elections Plan



file photo

The architects of Israel's new hardline policies—Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, to his left is Minister of Industry and Trade Ariel Sharon. To his right is Minister of Construction and Housing David Levy.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's elections proposal for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is dead, thanks to none other than Shamir himself.

Although the Palestinians believed, since it was proposed last March, that Shamir's plan was a non-starter—a mere diversionary tactic intended to put the PLO on the defensive and buy time for Israel—the PLO was willing to accept the idea of elections provided they were free and held under international auspices. A major concern for the PLO was not to appear as blocking the chances of advancing peace between Palestinians and Israelis. The PLO was concerned as well about its relationship with the United States. The latter had been arguing with fervor trying to convince the PLO to at least explore what the Shamir plan entailed.

Then on July 5, bowing to pressure from political rivals in his own Likud party, Shamir agreed to be bound by additional hardline conditions while pursuing the elections proposal. These conditions state that—

1. Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem cannot run for office or vote in the elections.
2. The proposed elections cannot be held until Palestinians end their 19-month-old Uprising.
3. Jewish settlements will continue to be built in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
4. Israel will not give up any territory, and no Palestinian state would ever be established.

To put it mildly, it is more likely that hell would freeze over before the Palestinians would accept such conditions.

Palestinians want to see an end to Israel's occupation. They want to exercise their right to self-determination including the right to establish a state of their own.

In exchange, Palestinians have offered tremendous concessions. These include recognition of the State of Israel on more than two-thirds of historical Palestine, and a promise to respect Israel's borders and security concerns.

From the Palestinian perspective, there is nothing more that can be offered.

What are the alternatives? For the Palestinians, things cannot be worse than they are at the present time. Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and other neighboring Arab countries are suffering, while Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are being murdered, injured, maimed, oppressed, imprisoned, and humiliated daily by Israeli soldiers and settlers.

If the choice is between subjugation, which is what the Shamir elections plan advocates, or dying while resisting Israel's occupation, it is obvious what the Palestinians will choose. In the meantime, however, it is almost certain that there will be a serious escalation of violence that will hurt Israelis just as it has been hurting Palestinians.

The U.S. government should wake up. Shamir and company are not interested in peace. What they want is not a piece of Palestine, but all of Palestine.

Shamir should be thanked for revealing his true intentions about his much-heralded elections plan. If he were as cunning as some of Israel's leaders, he would have left all the ambiguities in his plan—unclarified—in the hope of outliving the *Intifadah*. □

Arafat Rejects Shamir Plan and Warns of Escalating Violence
Baker Says U.S. Might Now Support International Peace Conference

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

In an interview published on July 10, 1989 in *The New York Times*, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat declared that the PLO could no longer consider supporting the Shamir plan for Palestinian elections because of the new conditions adopted by the Israeli Likud party and accepted by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

President Arafat also hinted at the possibility of ending the U.S.-PLO dialogue, which he said had accomplished little substance since it started in December of last year.

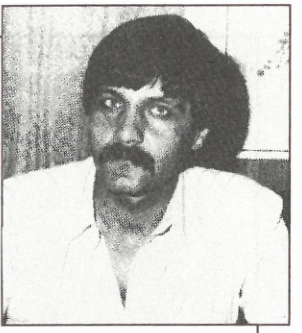
President Arafat suggested that the phase of discussing elections had ended and it was time for the United States to look at the Palestinian idea of holding an international peace conference under which direct talks between Israel and the PLO can take place.

While expressing outrage over the harsh tactics used by the Israeli army and armed Jewish settlers and vigilantes, President Arafat warned that, "we have not so far given any orders to use weapons, but I have said many times before that patience has a limit." He also added that he was certain that the level of violence in occupied Palestine would rise.

In the meantime, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker declared that if Israeli-imposed election conditions are found unacceptable by the Arabs, then the United States might support an international peace conference which may be necessary to break the current impasse. □

FROM THE PUBLISHER

A Letter to Mutawakel Taha: A Palestinian Political Prisoner



Mutawakel Taha.

Raymonda Hawa Tawil

Mutawakel Taha, is the head of the Palestinian Writers' Union in the West Bank. He was placed under administrative detention on February 18, 1988 for a six-month period at Ansar-III prison camp. He was rearrested on October 12, 1988 and held until December 12, 1988. On February 22, 1989, he was placed, once again, under administrative detention at Ansar-III prison camp where he is currently being held. Taha, when not in prison, works as an editor for the Palestine Press Service.

Dear Mutawakel,

When I saw you last, it was just a few days before your arrest. You spoke to me about your dreams: peace, white lilacs, a place called home, where your one-year-old daughter can play with toys and feel no fear. Peace, no wars and no bloodshed. Peace and love. You were full of life, full of optimism about the future. You never complained about your suffering and agony in jail . . . you had only been out of jail for a few months.

What was it that made you so serene coming out of Ansar III? I was amazed to see all of you returning from prison with such high morale. You came out full of humor and optimism. Yesterday, I saw our colleague [journalist] Kaddoura Moussa from Jenin. He had just been released after serving nine months in an Israeli jail. I was so impressed that he had a real sense of humor, and a real sense of organization and command despite his difficult position. He said—

> We have framed beautiful stones as souvenirs for the peace-loving soldiers. We put flags too on the stones—or the colors of the flag. We presented them with gifts of wood we carved ourselves: symbols of our identity. In peace we gain friends.
>
> Our colleagues took part in strikes with us, and some were shot in front of us. We work so hard to prevent that experience from happening again. The fascists and extremists must learn to respect our struggle.

Mutawakel, you reassured us with your great sense of pride and confidence that you were unharmed. We all know the suffering you went through, the torture, the days and nights of sleeplessness, the awful pain of being hanged by the arms for days on end. And yet you held strong. Still smiling, you said, "Men are born to endure, to be patient. What is life, a rose without a thorn?"

With such a strong and charismatic personality and smile, such handsome green eyes, such a well-developed body, you remind me of another Ansar hero: that handsome hero with blue eyes was about as tall as you, but he was in his 30s. (You are 27, if I guess correctly.) That leader of the first Ansar prison camp in Lebanon was a Fatah commander arrested during the Israeli invasion of Sidon, Lebanon. There, he united the victims of Ansar. Thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians, regardless of religious background, followed the gifted leadership of Salah Al-Tamari.

Al-Tamari was a noble fighter, a hero of the battle of Karameh. He married former Queen Dina of Jordan who played an important international role in saving the prisoners. In Sidon, Al-Tamari said of Ansar that it was a continuation of the war, though in a different form. "Ansar aimed at creating a state of fear and chaos through killings, beatings, torture, and insults."

Not a single soul escaped passing through the concentration camps on the seashore in Sidon where thousands were herded, day and night. Al-Tamari noted that so many were killed during beatings and under torture. Disfigured bodies were thrown at the gates of Sidon's cemeteries. I was told that one detainee asked for water. Instead of giving him water, the prison authorities tied him up, stuffed his mouth with newspaper, and covered his face with jam. Thousands of flies swarmed around his head, eating the jam and his flesh until he died. His family name was Abu Sekine.

"Ansar is a place where Jewish values are massacred every minute," said Al-Tamari. He was shocked to see the bad treatment and cruelty meted out by the Jews. He never expected to see Jews, who had suffered in places like Auschwitz, to erect and administer places like Ansar.

Mutawakel, that was the first lesson learned in Lebanon. Israeli policies work to systematically destroy the whole social structure. Much like their attempts to destroy Palestinian social structures, Israeli forces worked to dismantle the very family unit in southern Lebanon. Sometimes whole families were arrested and thrown into separate jails. Most of the time, the men, the breadwinners in most families, were rounded up and jailed, leaving mothers and children poverty-stricken, worried, and hungry.

In Palestine there are also Ansar II and III. Ansar III is in the infernal Negev Desert. Our colleague Hatem Abdul Qader endured another of Israel's prisons, Ramleh. He said the detainees' morale was very high. Each felt a sense of responsibility toward the others. No interpersonal problem ever arose during his detention period. The detainees always felt they were luckier than their brothers in Ansar III (Ketziot) in the Negev Desert. "We knew they were suffering in the harsher more inhuman conditions of Ansar III.

In Lebanon, the inmates did not escape the school of repeated humiliation. And when Al-Tamari ordered that all tents be burned in protest, all the tents went up in flames. One word was all it took to rid the detainees of their tents of humiliation.

The unity and strength of the Ansar detainees scared the Israeli soldiers, and the soldiers opened fire. On December 2, 1982, 25 prisoners were wounded and three were killed. Ten days later four prisoners were killed when they were smashed by bulldozers. When they removed the prisoners from that Valley of Hell—that is what the victims named it, Al-Tamari witnessed yet another gruesome incident. It involved four prisoners who had been hiding in a hole they dug. As a bulldozer approached, one of them stuck his head up above the ground and raised his hand in a sign of surrender. But without flinching, the bulldozer's blade continued in its path and sliced the man's head right off. His three friends who were hiding with him were also crushed to death, their bodies completely unrecognizable.

That day in Tyre, the structure housing the Israeli headquarters was blown up. Later, the American Embassy was blown up and the kidnapping of foreigners, including Americans, continued.

Ansar was an infernal hell. And Salah Al-Tamari, with his colleagues, paid a heavy price—torture. They saved 15,000 friends from further degradation. All those prisoners will never forget how they were sprayed with D.D.T., a carcenogenic insecticide.

Yet despite such cruelty, Ansar unity empowered the detainees.

Last month's kidnapping of Christopher George, the American codirector of Save the Children in Gaza and the West Bank, a friend to the Palestinian people, might be the beginning of a dangerous phenomenon. Mutawakel, your name was listed as one of the detainees the kidnapper[s] asked for in exchange for the release of Christopher George. It was wrong to kidnap, even out of desperation. It was worse to kill, as the Israelis did, when they gunned down Mohammad Abu Nasser, the alleged kidnapper.

In harsh inhuman conditions, Palestinian political leaders, the elite, the clergy (both Christian and Muslim), professors, students, lawyers, laborers all are there in prison with you. This is the best school for cadres and disciples noted an Israeli official. "It is amazing how experienced the detainees have become in self-control, regardless of how much their opinions may differ."

The Lebanese resistance was the result of oppression, discrimination, a brutal invasion, and the deliberate Israeli policy to demoralize a nation.

In 1983, in the original Ansar in Lebanon, in Beirut, in Sidon, everywhere, Israel left a scar on the heart of every Lebanese. The Israelis have shown the ugliest most inhuman face to Lebanon, and of course to Palestine. It is no longer sufficient to know that hundreds have been killed during the ***intifadah*** and thousands are in jail. In Lebanon, no one knows the precise number of civilian victims. Something is happening to the human heart, to the human consciousness. Something very terrible is happening to the human sense of justice.

Mutawakel, I know you and your colleagues are suffering. You are sowing the seeds of the future State of Palestine—the seeds of democracy. You are the ones that are strengthening the democratic structure of the Palestinian national movement. You are there in jails taking the responsibility, making major decisions, taking command. Through your suffering, Arafat was able to address the U.N. General Assembly. The Palestinians presented their case internationally, and through your suffering the Palestinian community responded. We should all feel the responsibility. Suffering should become a world responsibility. Every day, we should remember that the people are enduring hardship in Lebanon and Palestine.

And we should never be indifferent to killing, be it of our own people or the people in China. We should be infuriated by the killings in China. We suffered with the Chinese people, the innocent students whose right it is to protest as they were massacred and executed. In our dreams we must remember the sight of the Chinese student who stood in front of a tank.

We all dream of the homeland like the Palestinian poet Mutawakel. We sleep embracing the old country, with jasmine and coffee. We dream of lilacs of victory, and we are confused. When we awake we see bloodshed, killings, and babies with bullets in their heads. On June 26, 1989, 39 people were wounded in Gaza, and six were killed. We escape the nightmare of reality by growing indifferent. We escape the horror by applying ourselves to political analyses. We forget the toll in human lives. We live in a world full of suffering and death. So we become more indifferent, watching television to see what it gives us next. Too often we do not notice that all it gives us is the suffering of other people in other countries, like China.

Oh, Mutawakel, the tyranny in this world is so awful—so powerful. Students are choked and shot. And what for? For demonstrating and raising the "Statue of Liberty." We too are raising our "Statue of Liberty." We are screaming so that the voice of the victims can be heard. We are screaming, Mutawakel, so that your voice can be heard. □

Shamir's Elections Plan and The Carrot-and-Stick Game

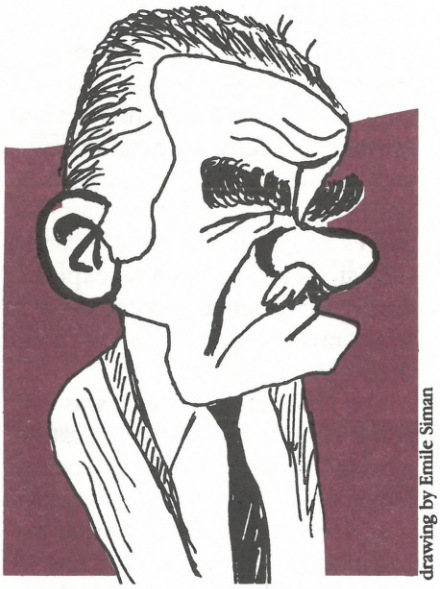
Raphael Calis

It is back to the carrot-and-stick game in the Middle East as all parties concerned—Palestinian, Israeli, and American—seek ways to either block or advance the Shamir elections plan and, in turn, the entire peace process.

The British have another name for this game. It is called "one upmanship," as each party to the conflict tries to upstage the other in a bid to influence the outcome. Diplomatically, however, this game might be labelled in harsher terms as the "art of double standards."

With the exception of the United States, perhaps, neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians actually want to become involved in elections. But each, for different reasons, does not want to appear to be the party accused of saying no—hence each is ready to play the game while refusing to give in on basic principles. That is why, following Likud's political gambit in early July, a serious crisis is once again in the offing.

In Israel, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir waved the carrot when he introduced his so-called elections plan to the world in March. The mere fact that he stalled for months after that—despite repeated American prodding—in agreeing to articulate details of such an elections plan is the clearest indication of his lack of enthusiasm for the whole process. He acted simply to impress a new U.S. administration that he was serious in seeking negotiations. At stake was the possibility of losing crucial American support, and with it, the flow of important economic and military aid from Washington.



drawing by Emile Siman

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Shamir waved the "Sharon-Levy" flag to portray himself as the "moderate" being pressured not to make any further political concessions to the Palestinians.

At risk was also a serious domestic political crisis in Israel. For months, polls continued to show that a majority of Israelis were ahead of their government in expressing a readiness to exchange land for peace if that would bring about a permanent peaceful settlement.

Shamir was also under pressure from Jewish Americans, who were urging him to meet Washington at least halfway and capitalize on and respond to the crucial, historic changes in the PLO's policies of recognizing Israel and renouncing "terrorism."

When Shamir sensed he was being cornered domestically and internationally—he resorted to the only stick he had available: the hardline, right-wing faction of his Likud party.

He waved the "Sharon-Levy" flag to portray himself as the "moderate" being pressured not to make any further political concessions to the Palestinians.

The idea behind this waving of the stick is to convince both Palestinians and Americans that they had more to lose if they rejected his elections plan under his own terms. Otherwise, he appeared to be saying, the Sharons of his party will

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take over and peace would become a mere impossibility.

Occasionally, Shamir has also waved another stick on high and in the face of the Bush administration—he would remind the world of those members of the U.S. Congress who are so loyal to Israel. In an unprecedented move, 94 U.S. senators wrote to President Bush in June asking him to show full support for Shamir's elections plan. There was an implicit warning coming from Capitol Hill that some legislation could be enacted by Congress to bring about a halt to the U.S.-PLO dialogue.

For a while, the United States also showed a readiness and an ability to play the carrot-and-stick game with both Palestinians and Israelis.

Initially, Washington placed its full backing behind the Shamir elections plan, advocating that it was "the only game in town." The Bush administration sought to lay aside Arab and Palestinian insistence on an international conference as the framework under which any negotiations or agreements can be reached.

And, of course, the Palestinians —not wanting to portray themselves as the rejectionists of peace—did not reject the elections plan outright.

This was partly brought about by the United States waving the American stick at the Palestinians. If they rejected the elections plan, the Palestinians were told, they would have risked the danger of halting the U.S.-PLO dialogue.

A few American sticks were also waved in the direction of the Israelis. Secretary of State James A. Baker bluntly told Israel to abandon its ambitions of a greater Israel, to accept the principle of exchange of land for peace, and to halt the building of new settlements. Baker told Israel to be flexible and take measures on the ground to ease the pressures on Palestinians staging the *Intifadah*, such as opening Palestinian schools and universities.

The message to Israel was clear: unless it adopts such measures, it risked the grave consequences of losing traditional American support.

The Bush administration, annoyed by Israel's continued expulsions of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip also scared Israel when it did not veto a U.N. Security Council resolution condemning these expulsions, opting to abstain instead. Thus, the resolution passed on a vote of 14 to 0.

When Shamir responded with his own Likud party stick—warning of the dangers inherent in the possibility that the party hardliners might take over—the Bush administration reacted mildly at first by carefully stating that the only proposals it accepted were those approved by the Israeli cabinet on May 20. In a bid to pacify their anger, the Arabs were told that the Likud party decisions would not be heeded by the U.S. government.

But it did not pass unnoticed in Israel that Baker did not take long to respond with yet another stick. Speaking to newsmen on his way back from the Far East following the Likud party convention, the U.S. Secretary of State issued a strong warning to Israel: If the Likud decisions become official Israeli government policy, then the United States might have to consider another avenue to peace through the convening of an international conference, which Shamir had categorically rejected. The United States was obviously hoping that this shock treatment would bring Shamir back to his senses.

In the meantime, the PLO—lukewarm to the whole process from its inception—did not lose time in waving its own stick at both the Americans and Israelis.

In a carefully timed statement, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat issued some jolting warnings to both Washington and Tel Aviv in two newspaper interviews—*The New York Times* and *Al-Hayat* newspaper.

Arafat warned that the PLO could no longer support the Shamir elections plan as a result of the restrictions imposed by the Likud party.

He also indicated clearly to Washington that the PLO was unhappy with the pace of the U.S.-PLO dialogue and if it continued at that rate and without progress on some substantive issues, the PLO might soon consider calling off this dialogue unilaterally. Arafat was cleverly throwing the ball back into the American court.

More significantly, Arafat very carefully hinted that the restraint that the Palestinians have displayed in the 19-month old *Intifadah* might soon dissipate in the face of mounting settler attacks on Palestinians under the eyes and with the blessings of the Israeli army.

The message from Arafat to both Washington and Tel Aviv was clear: Unless the situation changes immediately, the Palestinians might be forced to resort to armed struggle, and this time, the Palestinians might be forced to use arms and not stones to defend themselves. That, Arafat was indicating, would be self-defense and not terrorism.

An alarmed Washington immediately got into action. There was talk in Washington that a high-level American delegation including Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly and Policy Planning Director Dennis Ross might visit Israel in July to discuss ways of breaking the stalemate in a bid to bring Israel and Shamir to their senses.

The idea was to wave yet another American stick trying to make sure that Israel abides only by its commitments as approved by the Israeli government coalition. There was the prospect, of course, that there might be no coalition government by the time the United States moved to preempt Shamir's continued prevarications.

Whether these American carrots and sticks will jolt the Israelis into some realism this time still remains to be seen. But as each day passes, hopes for a diplomatic and peaceful breakthrough become weaker and dimmer. □

An International Peace Conference is the Best Vehicle to Solve the Palestine Question

Izzat I. Ghurani

Almost all nations agree that an international peace conference is a mechanism needed to reach a negotiated settlement of the Palestinian problem. Israel is an exception.

In the context of the Palestine question, there can only be two basic models for an international conference. An effective conference with full authority and participation of the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and the main parties to the conflict—primarily the PLO and Israel. Such a conference should be designed to produce a fully guaranteed solution based on international legitimacy, equitable to both Palestine and Israel. The second model is a ceremonial conference where, after some exchange of pleasantries, negotiators get together on a bilateral basis to produce, on their own, whatever settlement they can negotiate.

To negotiate means to confer with a view to compromise or reach an agreement. A compromise, on the other hand, is a settlement arrived at *after* mutual concessions are made by negotiators. It follows that a basic element in these statements is the existence of a dispute that is similarly defined by the parties concerned and about which they negotiate.

The main parties to the Palestine question are clear about their own views of the dispute and about the process through which a settlement could be reached. But this clarity is not leading the parties any closer to a common process of settlement because the dispute in question is not similarly defined. The Israeli government wants to negotiate from a position of strength toward a settlement based on a denial of the Palestinian national right to self-determination. It therefore calls for direct and bilateral negotiations without U.N. involvement. The PLO, on the other hand, wants to negotiate a settlement based on the Palestinian national right to self-determination. Hence, its call for negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations and an international conference with full authority and participation.

The difference between the two positions is clear and basic. At this stage, the dispute revolves around the right to self determination—the Palestinians want to exercise it and the Israelis refuse to acknowledge it. Unless the gap is bridged in favor of what is equitable, there will be no basis for negotiations that can lead to a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace.

The Palestinian people, like any other nation, has the right to self-determination. This right cannot be denied nor diluted. Therefore, a call for direct negotiations that ignores this right is viewed as an attempt to abort the Palestinian peace initiative and to keep Palestinian land under Israeli occupation.

It would be imprudent for the Palestinians to misread the Egyptian experience in direct negotiations with Israel because the two cases are not comparable. Egypt was, and is, a sovereign state over its land and the negotiations took place over the return of Sinai—a portion of its land. The peninsula belongs to Egypt and Israel recognized this fact prior to negotiations. Both parties were willing to negotiate and to reach an agreement about a commonly defined problem—i.e., the conditions under which Egypt would regain sovereignty over Sinai. Yet, a decade later, Israel was still dragging its feet on returning a small stretch of Egyptian beach called Taba, and only recently has the problem been resolved.

Izzat I. Ghurani is a professor of Economics at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank.

Palestine is a completely different story. Palestinians have no sovereignty over any part of their land and they want to establish that sovereignty. So, what they demand is not a solution based upon the nebulous concept of "Land-for-Peace." They demand a solution based upon recognition of their national legitimate right to self-determination. This implies, among other things, the right to name their own representatives, the right of return, and the right to establish their own sovereign state over their own sovereign land. These are inalienable rights and they do not require approbation from any outside source.

It is useful to note that Palestinians do not only make demands concerning what they consider to be their right. They also take positive steps in their obligations toward the international community and toward their neighbors. In the process, they have accepted all U.N. resolutions about Palestine and they have passed all types of acid tests concerning their real intentions. Above all, they have been pursuing a peace initiative that has continued to gain momentum ever since it was first launched last November in Algiers.

That initiative made waves across the world. Some Palestinians opposed it. They saw in it the beginning of a dangerous and unjustified drift toward unilateral concessions that could undermine the basic thrust of their *Intifadah* and their long and heroic struggle for independence. Others greeted it enthusiastically. They found it soundly based on a full understanding and appreciation of the complexity of the Palestinian problem. Some dismissed the document as another ploy by a devious organization, an experimental balloon that would soon burst and pass into oblivion. Today, there should be no longer any doubters about the integrity of that initiative.

The historic resolutions of the Palestine National Council are in line with its contents. The PLO chairman's address to the General Assembly of the United Nations in Geneva was in line with its contents. The increasing number of states that support the PLO attests to the realism with which Palestinians pursue their objectives. And finally, the decision of the U.S. government to open a substantive dialogue with the PLO confirms the peaceful intentions of the Palestinians.

Statements about local elections to produce "acceptable" representatives to negotiate with Israel are on the periphery and flawed.

A rereading of the resolutions adopted last November by the PNC at the present time should prove very instructive. For these resolutions presented a Palestinian initiative, bold and imaginative. They presented a clear Palestinian vision on peace and security, as well as on the Palestinian state and on the role of the United Nations.

The kind of peace envisaged by the PNC is clear. Its foundation realistic. Lasting peace and security should be based on mutual respect of the rights of the people. The guarantee for peace is to be found in political and economic cooperation and not in military power regardless of its size. Lasting peace would allow people to run their own affairs and would permit each nation to expect all that is good and wholesome from its neighbors.

The key to a Palestinian-Israeli settlement lies in negotiations between both parties. Such negotiations have their own requirements. It is a delusion to suggest that non-Palestinians can negotiate with non-Israelis to produce an acceptable settlement—or that an outside power can impose a settlement that could "stand the test of time." The main parties to the negotiations should be the legitimate and recognized representatives of both peoples—i.e., the PLO and the Israeli government.

As to the question of secure borders and the Israeli fears that a Palestinian state will threaten such borders, Palestinians surely have more reason to fear the large Israeli military machine than Israelis have to fear a nascent Palestinian state. This is precisely why the PLO insists on international guarantees and on having the peace negotiations conducted under a U.N. sponsored international conference with full authority. It is the reason the PLO would accept the deployment of U.N. forces on the Palestinian side of the border with Israel. The PLO went a step further in its assurances of the good intentions of Palestinians. If there are fears that the Palestinian state would threaten its neighbors, and if the democratic nature of the PLO is not a sufficient assurance of its good intentions, then the Palestinians will be open to accepting a short period of U.N. mandate during which they could be guided into democratic ways.

The main elements of these arguments are clear, precise, and fair. They deal with rights that are inalienable, they deal with processes that ensure peace and justice to all parties, and they revolve around a vision for civilized future relations based on mutual respect and advantage.

Since then, Palestinians have pursued a course of action that leads to peace, dignity, and security, not only for themselves but also for the Israelis. They do so because they consider these objectives to be important pillars upon which lasting and peaceful relations in the Middle East could be erected. Unfortunately, most of what is being suggested in response is either flawed or remains on the periphery of the basic problem.

Statements about "Palestinian rights" are on the periphery and flawed because they lack the specificity required in meaningful statements. Palestinians demand the right to self-determination—not just any right.

Statements about local elections to produce "acceptable" representatives to negotiate with Israel are on the periphery and flawed. Palestinians have the PLO as their only and legitimate representative. But even if this were not the case, one should ask: how can free elections be held under occupation?

Statements about direct negotiations outside an effective U.N. international conference with full authority and participation are on the periphery and flawed. Only a conference internationally constituted can guarantee a peaceful and just future for the area based on worldwide legitimacy and guarantees. Consequently, statements about an umbrella U.N. conference are on the periphery and flawed for the same reason.

Statements about a transitional home rule period of the Camp David variety are on the periphery and flawed. Such an arrangement cannot be a substitute for the complete withdrawal of Israel from the occupied lands and for the establishment of a Palestinian sovereign state.

Statements about the role of Arab states are on the periphery and flawed unless the statements assign a supportive role to them. The Palestinian case is now in the hands of its own people who, through its legitimate representative, the PLO, must pursue a solution based on the historic decisions of their own Palestine National Council.

Statements suggesting that the *Intifadah* should be stopped or reduced in intensity are on the periphery and flawed. The *Intifadah* derives from the will of the people to end Israeli occupation and to gain independence. This will, in turn, derives from the Palestinian desire for peace and dignity.

Palestinians have shown that they can take courageous and realistic stands. These reflect the qualities of a people that is being brutalized in its own land. No lesser qualities should be expected from Israel and from the world at large. □

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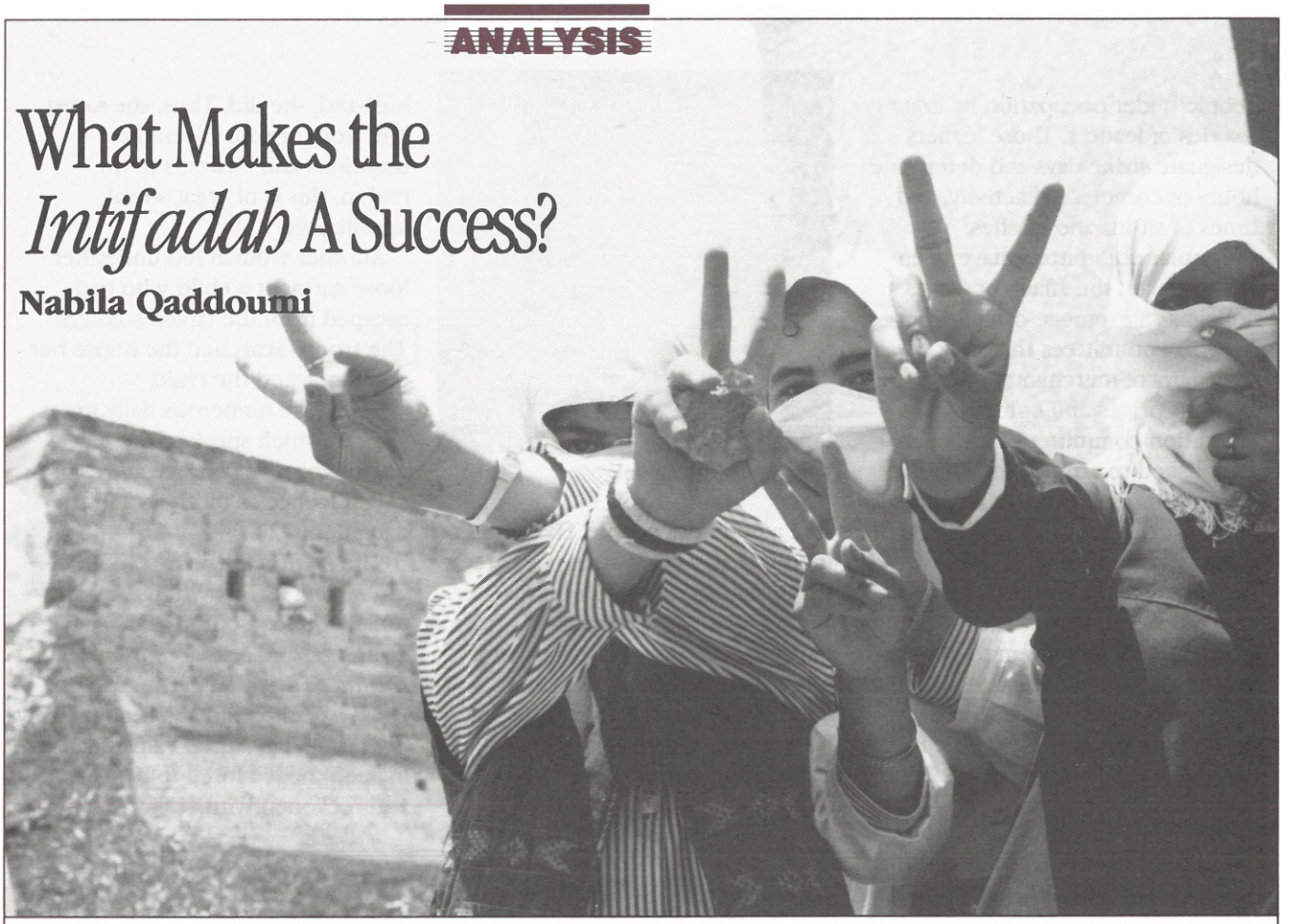
What Makes the *Intifadah* A Success?

Nabila Qaddoumi



Palestinian schoolgirls defiantly flashing the victory sign. file photo

The *Intifadah* of our people has astonished the world with its organization and its political approach. It has entered its second year, taking on special forms, goals, and timing. It has astounded the Zionist enemy which has denied, and continues to deny, the existence of the Palestinian people and its enduring historic rights in Palestine.

The stone has become the first tool of this revolution and our children have become the revolution's detonator.

Mass Support

The *Intifadah* is a mass struggle. It encompasses strikes, civil disobedience, stone-throwing, Molotov cocktail throwing, and boycotting the enemy. These tactics are not new. They comprise a Palestinian heritage which goes back nearly a century. Our struggle is old. Palestinian peasants began their resistance at the turn of the century when the early invasions of the Zionist colonialists began. Palestinian history has witnessed many Arab revolutions and the longest ever national strike in modern history—that of 1936 which lasted six months.

It is with pride in our long national struggle that the stone has become the first tool of this revolution and that our children have become the revolution's detonator. This demonstrates that the Palestinian generation which lives under occupation has been raised to partake in a destiny of revolution—in a time of both victories and setbacks. This generation is aware that any political move without reliance on force cannot end an occupation, bring about self-determination, and establish the Palestinian state. This generation, having seen the futility of Arab conferences and the neglect of the Palestinian case by international circles, decided to take the initiative in their own hands, to wage the resistance and renew the struggle.

Sound Organization

The Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU) has been set up to run the daily affairs of the

Nabila Qaddoumi is a member of the Palestine National Council. She is also the wife of Farouq Qaddoumi (Abu Lutof), the head of the PLO's political department.

people under occupation by issuing a series of leaflets. Those leaflets designate strike days and determine hours of commercial activity, and times of sit-ins and clashes.

Popular committees have been set up to run the affairs of towns, colleges and refugee camps. There are also committees that look after the affairs of merchants, and monitor prices and commodities. Education committees have been established to arrange for popular schools inside homes, in an effort to confront the decision of the Israeli military authorities to close down educational institutions. There are also relief committees for raising funds and sending them to besieged and adversely affected areas. Political committees study and assess political developments. Even agricultural committees have been founded to support farmers and guide them in cultivating every inch of cultivable land including back-yard gardens. Other popular committees work to rebuild demolished homes, defend detainees and support their families, while social committees are entrusted with settling disputes among the population.

Popular committees have become the alternative real authority in occupied Palestine. The residents have rallied around their leaders, and the occupation authorities' attempts to create an alternative leadership have failed. The people have said that there is only one single Palestinian leadership for anyone who wishes to enter into a political dialogue with the Palestinian people: the PLO.

Constructive Role of Women and Children

The Palestinian woman, who had been barred traditionally from playing a role in Palestinian society, has begun to support the fighters and participate in the *Intifadah*. The Palestinian woman, along with her duties in rearing and educating the children, has taken a leading

Mrs. Nabila Qaddoumi.

role among the people. Her role increases as more young men are being sent to detention camps. Women have played a leading role in protecting their husbands and sons. One woman protected a youth from arrest by claiming that he was her husband. When a skeptical Israeli soldier insisted that she kiss him, being her husband, she did. Thus, she saved him from prison. Given the traditions and customs of the region, this is of great social significance.

Another woman hid under her loose garment a child who had escaped from the Israeli soldiers. The troops searched the house but could not find the child.

There are numerous daily instances which speak of the Palestinian woman's courage and magnificence as mothers and daughters.

The *Intifadah* has evolved as a mobilizing factor within the Palestinian country setting aside social, class, age, and sexual barriers. The *Intifadah*'s goal of getting rid of Israel's occupation at a recognizably high cost, has united Palestinians, making them a force to be feared and reckoned with. □

For the first time, women are being freed from their traditional roles to challenge the occupiers. photo by Beverly A. Orr

The *Intifadah* and Its Leadership

Ziad Abu Amr

In its early stage, Palestinians viewed the *Intifadah*, the Uprising, in one of two ways. Some regarded the *Intifadah* as a catalytic event bound to activate a stagnant political situation. Therefore, a Palestinian political initiative had to be undertaken to capitalize on the *Intifadah*. Another view held that the *Intifadah* was a turning point in the Palestinian struggle. This school of thought saw the *Intifadah* as a process that should not stop before putting an end to Israel's occupation.

It seems that the *Intifadah*, as a catalytic event, has achieved its purpose. It was behind the convening of the nineteenth Palestine National Council (PNC), and it was behind the declaration of statehood and the other significant resolutions undertaken in the PNC. The *Intifadah* is behind the international interest in finding a solution to the Palestinian problem, and it is behind the opening of an official dialogue between the United States and the PLO.

The Palestinians today would like to see the *Intifadah* continue both as a catalyst and a mechanism to end the Israeli occupation. Evidence on the ground indicates that the *Intifadah* has assumed these combined roles after having dug deep roots into Palestinian society.

Despite the heavy toll, Palestinians in occupied Palestine feel that they have made a personal as well as a collective investment in the *Intifadah*. Every Palestinian has, in one way or another, paid a price. Palestinians do not want to see their suffering wasted without the cherished salvation: the end to Israel's occupation. Thus, the decision to continue the *Intifadah* enjoys a Palestinian consensus, as a means to a political settlement. Even more conservative figures who hint at the possibility of relenting the pressure of the *Intifadah*, like Mayor Elias Freij of Bethlehem, talk only about a truce for a period of time, not a full-scale end to the *Intifadah*.

There is a germaine difference between the Intifadah *and armed resistance: the* Intifadah *commands mass participation. Almost all Palestinians participate in the* Intifadah.

For the PLO leadership in exile, the *Intifadah* was the best thing that could have happened. It came to extricate the PLO from a crisis that had become almost chronic. The PLO's need for the *Intifadah* has become even greater since accepting U.N. Resolution 242, which practically means the abandonment of armed struggle. The PLO has renounced any military option. Yet, the PLO needs some kind of leverage to back its political and diplomatic struggle. The *Intifadah* is that leverage.

The PLO is fully aware of this fact. Repeated statements about the determination to continue the *Intifadah* and even to escalate it are very indicative of this. The concern over the *Intifadah* and the desperate need for its continuation were illustrated rather clearly by President Yasser Arafat himself. In response to Freij's idea of calling a one-year truce between Palestinians and Israelis, Arafat was reported to have said that "Any Palestinian leader who proposes an end to the *Intifadah* exposes himself to the bullets of his own people." [For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see *The Return*, February 1989, pp. 13-14.] Such particularly strong statements at a time when Arafat is trying very hard to boost PLO moderation indicate the seriousness with which the PLO views the need for the *Intifadah*.

Does that mean that the *Intifadah* has become an end in itself? The answer, of course, is no. Neither the Palestinians in occupied Palestine, nor the PLO leaders in exile, view the *Intifadah* as an end in itself. It is clear that under certain circumstances the Palestinians would be willing to

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consider ending the *Intifadah*. If there is evidence that enough of their demands are going to be met, the Palestinians will voluntarily stop the *Intifadah*—even if what is achieved falls short of ending Israel's occupation. For example, if an international peace conference is convened in which the PLO is a full participant, or even if a date is set to hold such a conference, the Palestinians may stop the *Intifadah*, at least for a certain period of time to give negotiations a chance.

If Israel recognizes the PLO, the *Intifadah* would also probably stop. And perhaps if the United States recognizes the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, or recognizes the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, the Palestinians might stop the *Intifadah*.

It is likely that Israel will gradually intensify its measures to suppress the *Intifadah*. Israel will try now to deal with the *Intifadah* in the same way it dealt with the armed resistance in occupied Palestine in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Israel is reconciling itself to the idea that the *Intifadah* may continue for years, and, believing that it will ultimately put an end to it the way it put an end to armed resistance, Israel will continue to confront the *Intifadah*.

However, there is a germaine difference between the *Intifadah* and armed resistance: the *Intifadah* commands mass participation. Almost all Palestinians participate in the *Intifadah*. This Uprising has dug solid roots into Palestinian society and become truly institutionalized, sustaining itself and becoming a way of life. The Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU) instructions are more and more strictly observed by the population, and in spite of the relentless Israeli measures to quell the *Intifadah*, it is becoming more and more intense and all-encompassing.

The relationship between the Palestinian people and the Israeli occupation authorities continues to be highly antagonistic. If the PLO political initiative is stalemated and the economic conditions in occupied Palestine continue to deteriorate, the *Intifadah* is likely to escalate in an explosive fashion. Neither the severe Israeli measures, nor the political gains by the PLO have weakened the resolve of the people.

There is a firm conviction on the part of the Palestinians that nothing short of a sustained Intifadah, *no matter what the cost, will convince Israel to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.*

This attitude emanates from the *Intifadah*'s intrinsic logic as the antithesis to occupation. There is a firm conviction on the part of the Palestinians that nothing short of a sustained *Intifadah*, no matter what the cost, will convince Israel to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Can the *Intifadah* continue? For how long? As an expression of rejecting foreign occupation, the *Intifadah* can continue as long as the occupation continues. This rejection can assume different manifestations. While the objective conditions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip do not allow the Palestinians to sever all ties with Israel, the Palestinians can draw on their resources as a unified people. They can maintain the adversarial relationship with the occupier and bring it to new heights.

It is precisely this kind of attitude which is emerging today.

The Palestinian Leadership

The relationship between the UNLU and the PLO in exile is a closely coordinated one, as the UNLU is only an organizational extension, a part, of the PLO. The UNLU depends on the PLO for guidance and instruction. There is, however, a sort of division of labor. Palestinian leaders in the UNLU serve as the field marshals, while those serving in the PLO in exile exercise their leadership at a higher level.

The amount of input the UNLU has been able to muster in PLO decisions and policies regarding the *Intifadah* has varied from time to time. At times the UNLU undertook responsibility for all or most leadership roles, such as determining the *Intifadah*'s daily agenda and writing the leaflets. The UNLU has also proposed or pushed for certain political moves to be adopted by the PLO, even giving the PLO a mandate on certain issues. At other times, the PLO has exerted pressure, solicited the required support of the UNLU, and imposed its vision. While the PLO and the UNLU can exercise mutually restrictive influences on one another, the relationship between the two has been dynamic and positive.

The various PLO factions in exile view the role of the UNLU in slightly different ways. The factions which maintain a tight organizational structure in occupied Palestine would like to see the UNLU playing a bigger role in leading and determining the agenda of the *Intifadah*. In the last few months, the exiled PLO's role in leading the *Intifadah* has increased considerably.

Due to repeated Israeli waves of arrests and expulsions of local leaders, a leadership vacuum within the West Bank and Gaza Strip is growing. The leadership vacuum in occupied Palestine means that internally, less experienced individuals have advanced in their respective organizational hierarchies to

A Palestinian demonstration in a West Bank village. file photo

replace arrested or expelled leaders. A few questionable day-to-day decisions by the UNLU can be attributed to this.

Externally, the leadership vacuum has enabled the PLO leaders in exile to have a larger say in running the affairs of the *Intifadah* and the situation in occupied Palestine in general. At other times, the vacuum provided some PLO leaders with the opportunity to consolidate their grips and manage the *Intifadah* in a way that would neutralize side effects undermining the influence of these leaders.

Over the years of occupying the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israel has deliberately preempted the emergence of a local leadership. Had this local leadership emerged, it would have enjoyed equal or perhaps even more support than the PLO leaders in exile. While local leadership would not compromise Palestinian national goals, it would also have checked the PLO leaders in exile and worked for an exact relationship between the "interior" and the "exterior." In the final analysis, the emergence of a local leadership could have been an asset to the PLO and what it stands for.

While Israel is mainly responsible for suppressing the emergence of a local leadership in occupied Palestine, a number of factors actually account for the nonemergence of an alternative leadership to that of the PLO in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. An alternative leadership to the PLO in occupied Palestine has never been a realistic option and will never be for the following reasons:

First, the PLO has managed through the years, in spite of setbacks, shortcomings, and corruption, to earn the right to represent the Palestinian people. The PLO and its leadership embody the national goals and national unity of the Palestinian people everywhere. No other party in occupied Palestine can claim to be the legitimate representative of all the Palestinian people.

Second, the PLO has managed over the years to build organizational extensions in occupied Palestine which enjoy the support of the people. It also managed through these organizational extensions and the PLO institutions inside and outside occupied Palestine to mobilize the people and shape their national awareness. For the people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the PLO has become the only frame of reference. There is no alternative organized presence to that of the PLO. The religious leadership cannot be a substitute or even a parallel force to the PLO. The religious leadership lacks the national record, the sizeable following, and the appealing and realistic political program the PLO has.

Third, Israel itself has prevented the emergence of a credible local leadership. But in any case, if that credible leadership had emerged, it could not have been an alternative to the PLO, in terms of what the PLO stands for.

Fourth, the PLO is quite representative socially and politically. The various Palestinian social classes relate to this leadership and believe that it represents their national and even their social class interest. Politically, the left, the right, and the center agree that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Fifth, the PLO is democratic. It represents groups with different political and ideological orientations. The Palestinian people can criticize their leadership, orally and in writing, and get away with it, in occupied Palestine, in Tunis, and everywhere. The democratic nature of the PLO is a necessity. The PLO leaders cannot force their wills upon the Palestinian people in occupied Palestine and in the diaspora.

Sixth, the PLO has the financial capability to support the Palestinian people. It also has the means to maintain a dynamic relationship with the population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Its material and moral presence is overwhelming. The PLO can reward, co-opt, and if necessary punish, when the national interests of the Palestinian people are at stake.

The relationship between the UNLU and the PLO in exile is a closely coordinated one, as the UNLU is only an organizational extension, a part, of the PLO.

Seventh, the PLO enjoys Arab and international recognition as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. If the emergence of an alternative leadership in occupied Palestine was not possible before the *Intifadah*, it has become even less likely after the *Intifadah*. The *Intifadah* as well as the U.S. government decision to open a dialogue with the PLO have written the death certificate for an alternative leadership to the PLO.

Thus the PLO and its organizational extension in occupied Palestine, the UNLU, are like the challenged parents of a precocious child—the *Intifadah*. Palestinian leaders inside and out recognize the value of the *Intifadah* and cherish and nurture it. And although it is guided by the leaders inside and out, it also has its own inner dynamics. Meanwhile, it seems that the hopes of all Palestinians everywhere are bound to the *Intifadah* and its success. □

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Ha-Sicarikim: Israel's Newest Terror Group

Pinhas 'Anbari

It took Jerusalem archaeologist Yoram Zafrir four years to write his first novel, *The Signal of the Sword*. Reading it takes us back to—of all places—modern times. The novel details the heroic story of a handful of Jewish fighters facing the Roman army at the Massadah fortress. When Roman conquest was imminent, the fighters committed suicide, rather than face enslavement.

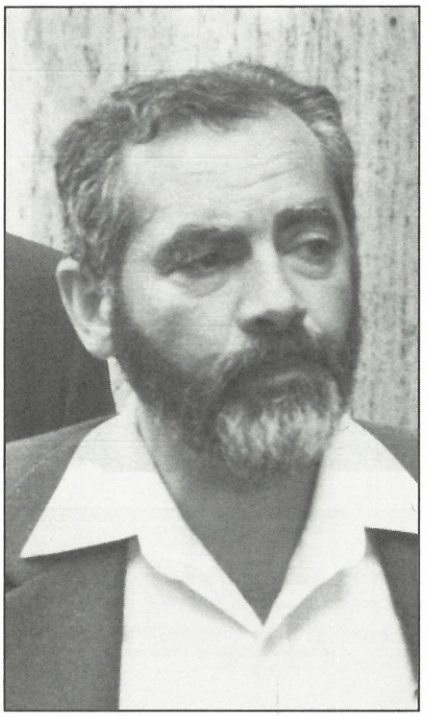
The Massadah fighters were the original *Sicarii*: the most extreme group in the great revolt against the Romans. They went on fighting even after the collapse of the Jewish state and the destruction of the second temple.

If I were Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, I would be the first to worry after reading this novel.

The modern-day *Sicarii* are well acquainted with Jewish history. They chose the name, not to remind the Israelis of their trauma 2,000 years ago, but to clearly distinguish and distance themselves from the rest of the nation's rightwing.

Sicarii means "dagger holders," after the Latin word *sica* for dagger. They hid their little daggers inside their heavy mantles and assassinated Roman enemies, and suspected Jewish collaborators alike.

This was the difference between them and the other Jewish zealot groups—the *Kana-im*. While most of the rebels restricted themselves to fighting the Romans, a few—among which the *Sicarii* were the most prominent—also raised their hands against their Jewish brethren. The *Sicarii* not only murdered their opponents in the "Peace party"—those who opposed the revolt against the Romans in the first place—but also their colleagues who battled the Romans but differed with them ideologically.



The *Sicarii* are politically to the right of Rabbi Meir Kahane. courtesy of ADC

The Sicarii are not only political radicals, but religious fanatics as well.

A similar scenario is developing today. The *Sicarii* are once again attacking the enemies, namely, the Palestinians, and the modern version of the old Jewish "Peace party"—namely, Peace Now, the Left, and also the media. Moreover, hidden daggers are also awaiting those in the Israeli right, who try to take part in the peace process.

The initial *Sicarii* harassment against the moderate right was directed against Rabbi Yehudah Amital, a settler leader of the dovish religious Meimad party. The way to Shamir begins at Rabbi Amital.

The open animosity toward Likud leader Shamir erupted on the eve of a recent election campaign in Israel, a year ago. The Likud initiated a process to outlaw Rabbi Meir Kahane's racist Kach party. In an address Kahane gave a gathering in Jerusalem, it was hard to decide whom he detested more: the hated Left, or Shamir.

Nevertheless, Kahane is still not a member of the *Sicarii*. One of his followers, Noam Federman, who had been jailed for damaging Arab property in Jerusalem made the distinction very clear: the Rabbi for-

Pinhas 'Anbari is a journalist who writes for the Israeli newspaper Al-Hamishmar.

bade us to hit Jews." Federman denounced the threat against Rabbi Amital. "We have a dispute," Federman said, "but our energy must be directed against the Arabs."

The *Sicarii* are those to the right of Kahane, and the dispute is whether to hit or not to hit Jews. Though their identity is not yet known, it is likely that the *Sicarii* are the followers of Kahane, who, while incited by his preaching against the Likud, ignored his refusal to attack Jews.

Kahane's party is not the only extreme right-wing group in operation now. Others, like the original *Sicarii*, centered their activity around the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The aspiration to rebuild the temple is shared by many extremist groups, such as that of Yehudah Etzion, leader of the Jewish underground which maimed the Palestinian mayors in the West Bank in June 1980, and planned to demolish *Al-Aqsa* Mosque. Another group was organized around Rabbi Yisrael Ariel, who gained his reputation during the stormy days of the Yamit pullout of 1982, when he called for active resistance to Israeli soldiers who were evacuating settlers from the Sinai. Rabbi Ariel tried to penetrate *Al-Aqsa* Mosque through underground tunnels with his followers in 1981, but was halted in time by police. Another group is linked to Yoel Lerner, who was the first to preach the destruction of mosques, and gathered ammunition for that purpose. He too was caught in time, and sent to prison.

Yehuda Etzion, and Rabbi Ariel were among the founders of *Gush Emunim*, but they are no longer members in settler organizations because of their extremist preachings and actions. The *Sicarii* are not only political radicals, but religious fanatics as well. They are against the Arabs, and against Israeli democratic values as well. They represent the most dangerous mixture of religious and chauvinist teachings, a strong element of which exists in *Gush Emunim* and right-wing political parties—even the Likud.

There are reasons to believe that Shamir is very well aware of the dangers posed by the *Sicarii*, and this may be the main reason he preferred to form a government with the Labor party, rather than the extreme right. □

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Jewish settlers attempt to abduct a Palestinian child while his mother fights to set him free. photo by Azzam Obeid

Settler Violence On the West Bank—With Israeli Government Approval

Emile Siman

When young Terza Porat was fatally shot in the West Bank village of Beita, a little over a year ago, the Israeli army meted out "collective punishment" to the village. The Israeli occupation authorities hastily concluded that the Palestinians of Beita had stoned the young Jewish settler to death. Fourteen homes were blown up and six people were expelled to Lebanon. Beita, situated 10 miles south of Nablus and home to some 7,000 people, paid the toll.

On May 29, when Palestinian villagers allegedly threw rocks at a group of Jewish seminary students and injured Rabbi Yitzhak Ginzberg, the head of Joseph's Tomb Yeshiva, a dozen heavily armed settlers rampaged through the village of Kifl Harith, torching homes and planted fields, and killing 16-year-old Ibtissam Abdel Rahman.

What brought about this vigilante-style retribution against the Palestinians?

The Kifl Harith foray was the climax of a wave of settler instigated violence against Palestinians and their property which began gaining momentum in April. By launching their own "counter-*Intifadah*" or "*Intifadah*-II," the implanted Israelis contend that they have to retaliate because they can no longer tolerate "Arab provocations." So far, "Arab provocations" have been confined to pelting settler-owned cars on roads in occupied Palestine.

May's victim of settler aggression was by no means the first, as at least 20 Palestinians have been killed by

Emile Siman holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Indiana University. He is an assistant editor at the Jerusalem Press Service.

Israeli civilians during the 19 months of the *Intifadah*, the Palestinian Uprising, according to Israeli human rights groups. Even a rabbi, Rabbi Moshe Levinger, the *Gush Emunim* leader of the Qiryat Arba Jewish enclave in Hebron, has been charged with manslaughter. He is believed to have killed a local Palestinian shopkeeper last September.

But this spring, more frequent and destructive settler attacks signalled an ominous trend—a harbinger of things to come. Most of the Israeli settler raids against Palestinian villages occur after nightfall, when the armed, trigger-happy settlers fire their automatic weapons at homes, damaging rooftop solar heaters and water tanks, and shattering window panes. The unarmed and terrified villagers huddle inside their homes, as the pillaging settlers set fire to crops, uproot fruit trees, and smash cars and other property.

***At least 20 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli civilians during the 19 months of the* Intifadah.**

Israeli settlers, who live on mostly expropriated Palestinian land, some just a "stone's throw" from Palestinian communities, generally prey on small villages where Israeli military presence is minimal or altogether nonexistent, thus complementing the work of the Israeli army in its attempts to repress the Palestinian rebellion against occupation. In some instances, the Jewish settlers have burst into houses, assaulted the occupants, and ransacked the contents of their homes. Recently, there have been at least two attempts to start fires inside mosques in Hebron, acts which infuriated Palestinians, especially the religious and conservative. During the month of May, there were cases also in which Israeli settlers abducted, detained, and roughed up Palestinian youths and children for hours.

The Palestinians, for their part, have denounced the Israeli settlers'

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir being heckled by Israeli settlers demanding that he use more force in battling the *Intifadah* (Brouqin, West Bank).

drive to terrorize them and destroy their agricultural economy, recognizing that these acts complement the army's routine destruction of orchards from which stones have allegedly been thrown at its patrols. The inhabitants of Sinjil, a small village in the Ramallah area, wrote to U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in May, charging that the settlers had contaminated their drinking water and sniped at them frequently with the specific intent of preventing them from working their fields and herding their sheep.

What is disquieting is that the settler exploits sometimes take place under the watchful eyes and ears—and possibly with the collusion—of the Israeli army. Moreover, no punitive actions have been taken against the settlers. In 20 settler-perpetrated murder cases, Israeli courts have indicted two of the suspected Israeli culprits and sentenced one, Yisrael Ze'ev, for killing a Palestinian shepherd near Shiloh.

But what angered Israeli public opinion most—and generated a backlash against the Jewish settlers in the West Bank—were incidents in which they assaulted soldiers. An angry settler reportedly slapped an officer who had taken away a pistol, and another is said to have pounced on a group of soldiers in a similar fracas. Not even Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has been immune to their aggressive outbursts. On June 20, they shouted him down and yelled epithets during the funeral of a Jewish settler who had been stabbed by a Palestinian shepherd the day before. Shamir ignored or belittled the settler reprisals against Palestinians, speaking instead of the "suffering" of the settlers, and what they have to put up with as victims of Palestinian stone-throwing attacks.

Israeli public opinion, expressed in editorials, warned the settlers against taking the law into their own hands, and enjoined them from usurping the Israeli army's responsibilities to "maintain law and order." Even *Gush Emunim*'s publication, *Nekuda*, denounced settler excesses. Some left-leaning papers suggested that Shamir's tolerance, if not outright condoning, was instrumental in their brazen behavior.

What is disquieting is that the settler exploits sometimes take place under the watchful eyes and ears—and possibly the collusion —of the Israeli army.

Some of the settler attacks were probably premeditated in the hope of provoking a violent response by the Palestinians, which, in turn, would trigger more Israeli military intervention. Others believe that making life unpleasant for the Palestinians would push them to leave, or be driven out of "Eretz Israel" altogether. Various settler groups have set up "self-defense" militias. One is currently being led by a Kach party activist, Shmuel Ben Ishai, who is under investigation by police for criminal offenses. Another "self-defense" militia uses attack dogs against Palestinian stone-throwers, thus sparing the settlers from firing their weapons. In June, Likud party members endorsed a call to set up an official militia which would undertake security and defense tasks in conjunction with the Israeli army.

The settlers, who number around 70,000, not counting those who settled in the East Jerusalem area, are striving to undermine Shamir's political plan, fearing that elections would lead to negotiations and eventual Palestinian self-determination and statehood. They also find it opportune to resort to such tactics at a time when Shamir faces stiff opposition to his plan within the Likud party. And even if the Israeli government should go ahead with the elections plan, there is an ugly precedent: Israel held municipal elections in 1976, and four years later, Israeli terrorist groups planted a series of bombs, maiming two Palestinian mayors. The Israeli government's response was to expel or dismiss the mayors on the grounds that they were "pro-PLO."

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, whose own Labor party began building settlements shortly after the 1967 war, believes the settler actions carry political overtones. Speaking before a bloc of Labor party Knesset members on June 20, he argued that there are extreme rightists in Israel who fear the Israeli "peace initiative" and are aware of its potential implications should it proceed. "I see in their reaction an attempt to strain and undermine the situation, lest the initiative meet with success." Leaders of the Israeli settlers have lobbied against the Shamir plan and have demanded the "eradication" of the Palestinian *Intifadah* by military means, including the expulsion of Palestinian activists, and the allocation of more funds for building new settlements.

The escalation of settler violence, and the lack of Palestinian recourse to justice will no doubt inflame an already charged atmosphere on the West Bank. More settler attacks could lead to desperate Palestinian reprisals, including the resort to firearms. Violent acts by Jews and Palestinians could spiral out of control in the coming months, triggering more brutal repression by the Israeli army. Now, Gen. Yitzhak Mordechai is commander of the central military region, which includes the West Bank. His ruthless methods in subjugating the Gazans have been demonstrated many times. In this worst-case scenario, any hope for reaching a peaceful settlement would quickly be dashed. □

Does Britain Matter When it Comes to the Middle East?

Jane Hunter

The day Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir met British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the British media led their Middle East reports with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's harsh warning to AIPAC, Israel's congressional lobby, that Israel must give up its hopes of annexing the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The relegation of the Shamir-Thatcher meeting to second place in the newscasts prompted a recurring question about Britain's Middle East policy: Does it really matter?

Faisal 'Uweidah, the Palestine Liberation Organization's representative in London, contends that it does. "Britain is seriously involved" in efforts to resolve the crisis in the Middle East, and, as part of that involvement, Britain has upgraded its relations with the PLO to "the highest level," he says.

However, 'Uweidah adds this proviso to his upbeat assessment: "Britain does not want to get too far ahead of the United States." Others concerned with British policy toward the Middle East maintain that Washington is the only player that really matters. Still others argue that the United Kingdom (U.K.), along with its European Community (EC) partners and the Nordic countries, is most effective when it directs its efforts to pressuring the United States.

Whatever its relevance, it is the constant interplay between Washington's Middle East policy and European policy that provides the context in which British policy is formed and judged. But that basic fact of life does not diminish Britain's active concern for the Middle East, particularly the question of Palestine. And it certainly does not mean that Thatcher, her eye ever-focused on center stage, would not welcome a more prominent role in solving the region's problems. In May, Israeli Energy Minister Moshe Shahal reported an offer made to him by British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe to mediate between Israel and "the Arabs."

In 1986, Thatcher became the first British prime minister to visit Israel. While there, she called for elections to create a non-PLO leadership in occupied Palestine.

To a U.S. observer, Britain's Middle East policy appears quite progressive. Along with other members of the EC, Britain has endorsed an international conference. Although it supports the concept of a secure Israel, the U.K. does not sell Israel arms or oil, and last year, when the Mossad, the Israeli foreign intelligence agency, was discovered to have run an unauthorized operation in Britain, several of its agents were deported. Between 1982 (the year Israel invaded Lebanon) and 1987, Israel was not invited to participate in British arms fairs.

Shamir's visit to Britain, his first as prime minister, came after several years of British refusals to receive him. London deemed Shamir's current politics impossibly obdurate and his past, as a terrorist in British-ruled Palestine, problematic. Gracious as it was, the British welcome to Shamir on May 21, was understood to be in the context of EC efforts to accelerate the peace process and, specifically, to make sure that Israel did not feel ignored and isolated.

Conscious of its history in Palestine as the colonial authority until 1948, and increasingly distressed by Israel's harsh repression of the *Intifadah*, the British government is seeking a compromise solution, says one Middle East analyst. It might well be seeking negotiating partners for Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres, whose slogan is "land for peace," but who explicitly rejects a Palestinian state. Britain itself backs territorial concessions, but does not advocate the establishment of a Palestinian state.

In 1985 and 1986, the U.K. engaged in a search for "suitable" interlocutors for the Palestinians, hosting a Jordanian Palestinian dele-

Jane Hunter is editor of the monthly magazine, Israeli Foreign Affairs.

gation. Britain has traditionally close ties with Jordan and reportedly served as a meeting point for King Hussein and then Prime Minister Shimon Peres. The *Intifadah* and King Hussein's renunciation of interest in the West Bank prompted Britain to shift to its current position that the Palestinians must speak for themselves. In March, Thatcher called on Israel to negotiate directly with Palestinian representatives "from inside and outside the [T]erritories."

However, few doubt that the prime minister would like to bring Jordan back into the peace process. When he reported to the Israeli Cabinet on his visit to London, Prime Minister Shamir said Thatcher had assured him that if Israel would renew its offer of a confederation including Jordan, Israel, and a West Bank "entity," King Hussein would reinvolve himself in the peace process.

The use of the word "Palestinians," rather than "PLO," in the British formulation is deliberate, because, says a Middle East analyst, "the prime minister has a problem with terrorism." Nonetheless, Britain does not regard the PLO as a "terrorist organization," describing it instead as an umbrella organization, some of whose groups might be terrorist. According to this analyst, when the government banned members of *Sinn Fein*, the Irish nationalist party, from speaking on television, the PLO privately inquired whether it could expect the same restriction and was given reassurances that it would not.

Immediately after the United States decided to engage in a dialogue with the PLO last year, Britain sent Foreign Office Minister of State William Waldegrave to Tunis to meet with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. In early May, as Waldegrave received Arafat's adviser Bassam Abu Sharif in London, he told reporters that British ties with the PLO would be upgraded as part of "carrying forward the peace process." While Waldegrave did not respond to Abu Sharif's request that British Prime Minister Thatcher meet with PLO Chairman Arafat, he did not rule out such a meeting. Indeed, he noted that an Arafat meeting with British Foreign Secretary Howe would come before one with Thatcher.

Advanced as it might seem from a U.S. perspective, some British activists concerned with Middle East issues have a less sanguine view of Britain's policy, contending that, within the European context, it is the least sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. These activists point to the explicit position of other EC countries that the PLO must participate in a peace settlement and to Prime Minister Thatcher's personal commitment to Israel.

Finchley, Thatcher's London constituency, is home to many Jews and is twinned with the Israeli town of Ramat Gan. Before she became prime minister she visited Israel three times and acted as chair of the Parliament's British-Israel Friendship League. In 1986, Thatcher became the first British prime minister to visit Israel. While there, she called for elections to create a non PLO leadership in occupied Palestine.

While the U.K.'s parliamentary form of government does not produce the contradictory positions often manifested by the U.S. legislative and executive branches, it is widely perceived that Thatcher's position is balanced by the Foreign Office, many of whose staffers are believed to be "pro-Arab." The way this works out in reality, explained another analyst, is that "Palestinian officials get a sympathetic hearing from a high Foreign Office official, but then the veto comes from Downing Street," Thatcher's official residence.

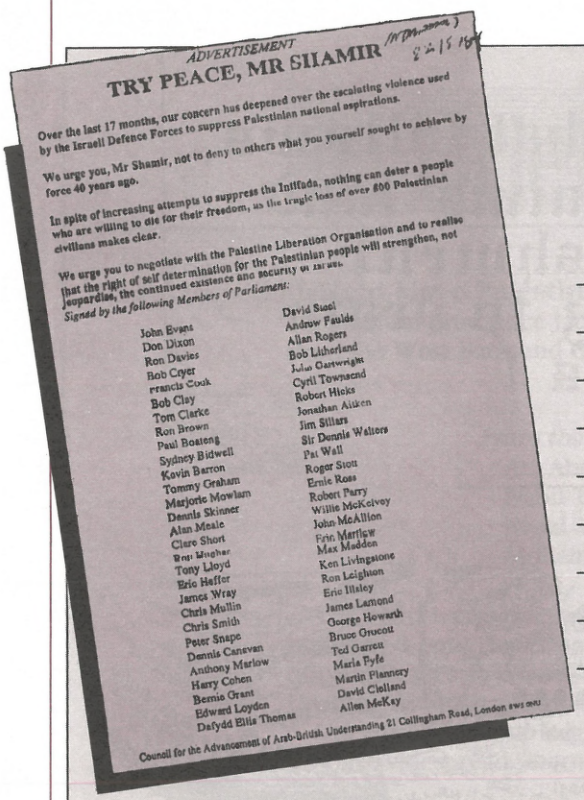
There is often speculation about disputes on Middle East policy between the Foreign Office and the prime minister and her cabinet (whose officers serve at her pleasure). Two days before Israeli Prime Minister Shamir arrived in London, the British government held a briefing for journalists at which it sought to quell reports that Thatcher, Foreign Secretary Howe, and the Foreign Office were at odds over how to respond to Shamir's proposal for elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

One source of those reports was apparently Israel itself. During the week before Shamir's arrival,

A Call for Sanctions Against Israel In the British House Of Commons

On June 13, 1989, 72 members of the British House of Commons called on the British government to impose sanctions on Israel. The proposed sanctions read:

That this House congratulates Her Majesty's Government for making it clear in that the Israeli Government plan for limited and conditional elections in the occupied territories is unacceptable and cannot form the basis for a peace settlement in the Middle East, notes that the plan rejects a two-state solution and negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation and makes no provision for the Palestinians of East Jerusalem to participate in the elections; also notes that Prime Minister Shamir has pledged to cede not an inch of territory reject the plan; and therefore has threatened painful consequences if the population of the occupied territory reject the plan; and thefore calls on Her Majesty's Government to introduce limited sanctions to prevent an escalation of brutality in the occupied territories and to encourage the Israeli Government to enter meaningful negotiations.



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TRY PEACE, MR SHAMIR

Over the last 17 months, our concern has deepened over the escalating violence used by the Israeli Defence Forces to suppress Palestinian national aspirations.

We urge you, Mr Shamir, not to deny to others what you yourself sought to achieve by force 40 years ago.

In spite of increasing attempts to suppress the Intifada, nothing can deter a people who are willing to die for their freedom, as the tragic loss of over 800 Palestinian civilians makes clear.

We urge you to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organisation and to realise that the right of self determination for the Palestinian people will strengthen, not jeopardise, the continued existence and security of Israel.

Signed by the following Members of Parliament:

John Evans
Don Dixon
Ron Davies
Bob Cryer
Francis Cook
Bob Clay
Tom Clarke
Ron Brown
Paul Boateng
Sydney Bidwell
Kevin Barron
Tommy Graham
Marjorie Mowlam
Dennis Skinner
Alan Meale
Clare Short
Roy Meghar
Tony Lloyd
Eric Heffer
James Wray
Chris Mullin
Chris Smith
Peter Snape
Dennis Canavan
Anthony Marlow
Harry Cohen
Bernie Grant
Edward Loyden
Dafydd Ellis Thomas
David Steel
Andrew Faulds
Allan Rogers
Bob Litherland
John Cartwright
Cyril Townsend
Robert Hicks
Jonathan Aitken
Jim Sillars
Sir Dennis Walters
Pat Wall
Roger Stott
Ernie Ross
Robert Parry
Willie McKelvey
John McAllion
Eric Marriage
Max Madden
Ken Livingstone
Ron Leighton
Eric Illsley
James Lamond
George Howarth
Bruce Grocott
Ted Garrett
Maria Fyfe
Martin Flannery
David Clelland
Allen McKay

Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding 21 Collingham Road, London sw5 0NU

Many British Jews and almost all of Israel's supporters in Parliament are now calling for dialogue with the PLO.

Advertisement as it appeared in the London-based Newspaper, the *Independent*, on June 2, 1989. The advertisement, which was signed by 58 members of the British Parliament, called on Israel to negotiate with the PLO and supported Palestinian self-determination.

William Waldgrave told the *Gulf News* of Dubai that Israel was trying to pressure Britain not to take "a firm stand on the Palestinian issue" by "attempting to drive a wedge between the Prime Minister's Office and the Foreign Office." Israeli officials scornfully accused Waldegrave—and Waldegrave's seniors at the Foreign Office, who backed his charges with some of their own, labeling the Israeli splitting "tactic" as "insulting and offensive"—of making excuses for their failure to impose their policies on Thatcher and her cabinet.

After their meetings with Shamir, both Thatcher and Howe pronounced Shamir's elections plan insufficient, and stressed the need for a solution "based on territory for peace." At the same time, the Thatcher government expressed no strong reaction to the PLO Executive Committee's rejection of the Shamir plan. Shamir serenely contended that the meetings went very well.

The Israeli prime minister must have been relying on his inner conviction—except for a group of Jewish supporters of his Likud coalition, there is little support in Britain for his hardline positions. Many British Jews and almost all of Israel's supporters in Parliament are now calling for dialogue with the PLO. The Middle East platform of the opposition Labor party is virtually indistinguishable from that of Thatcher's Conservative government. BIPAC (the British-Israeli Public Affairs Committee, modeled on AIPAC) and the Conservative Friends of Israel, which had a brief spell of prominence in the first half of the decade, but never much influence, have lapsed into irrelevancy.

On the other hand, since the start of the *Intifadah*, support for the Palestinian cause has been growing, say activists. There are a number of solidarity groups and they have sent a steady stream of delegations to Palestine. They have also set up a coordinating body, the Joint Committee for Palestine. The committee has organized large demonstrations and credits its energetic campaign for the failure of the Association of British Travel Agents convention last year in Israel.

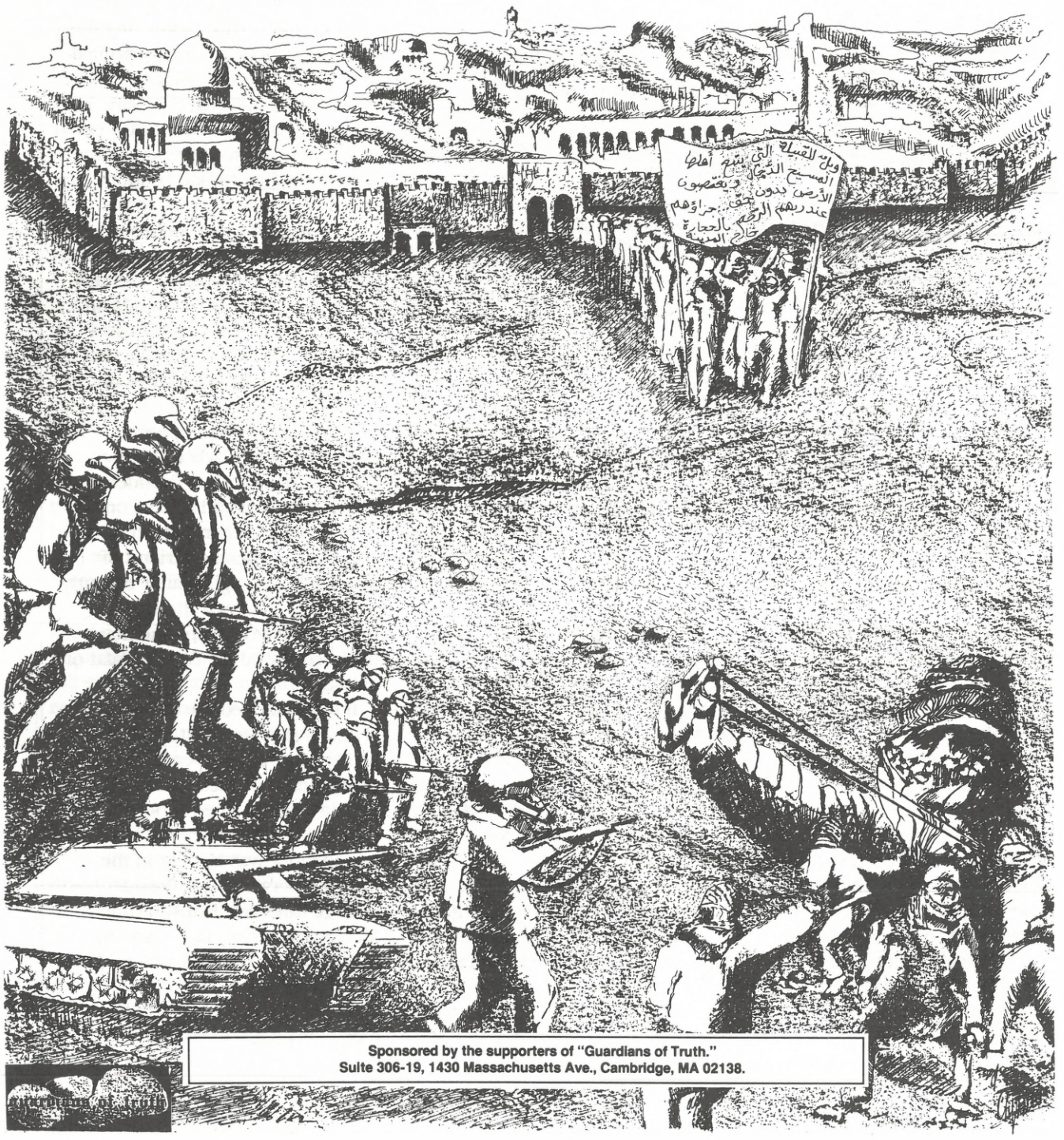
Every week a group calling itself "Women in Black" demonstrates for peace outside the London offices of *El Al*, Israel's national airline. Pickets outside the Israeli Embassy and 10 Downing Street protested Shamir's presence in London.

Ironically, although Israel has been credited with mobilizing the United States to block or marginalize European involvement in the peace process, it might be Israel that enables Britain and other European countries to play a greater role, according to one London-based Middle Eastern diplomat. He claims that Prime Minister Shamir is presently worried that Washington and Moscow are moving to a meeting of the minds on the Middle East, so Shamir "now wants the Europeans to take the lead on the Middle East, not the superpowers."

According to this diplomat, Shamir is particularly eager for Thatcher and French President François Mitterrand to take on this role. As is Thatcher, Mitterrand is regarded as a staunch friend of Israel, even though Shamir recently bitterly condemned the French president for receiving the newly declared President Yasser Arafat of Palestine.

If this is indeed the case, Shamir's strategy must be simply: add another layer of contention to the peace process by reinforcing Britain's accustomed subordinate role to the United States. How this would work was evident in the meeting between U.S. President George Bush and British Prime Minister Thatcher in London on June 1, when Bush refused to do more than "take note" of Britain's objections to Shamir's elections plan. □

WOE unto the tribe that follows false messiahs and claims land falsely for their punishment under god is stoning to death outside the city gates !



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In Brief

Israel Expelled Eight More Palestinians in June

For the first time since January, the Israeli occupation authorities expelled eight Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip on June 29. The eight, who ranged in ages from 26 to 46 years are—

From the Gaza Strip:	*From the West Bank:*
Ata Abu Karsh	Mohammad Lebadi
Nabil Tamuz	Radwan Ziada
Riyad Adjur	Akef Hamdallah
Mohammad Madawah	Taysir Naserallah

The eight were ordered expelled in August 1988 but their court appeals were not completed until June when they were put on a helicopter and taken to Zummareya, just outside Israel's so-called "security zone" in Lebanon. They were charged with leading the Uprising or being active in the PLO.

Since the *Intifadah* began in December 1987, Israel has expelled a total of 55 Palestinians, despite widespread international condemnation.

Villagers Billed for Demolition of Their Homes

In June, the Israeli occupation authorities handed 15 Uthnah villagers, near Hebron, notifications demanding payment of 4,000 shekels each for demolishing their homes. The written note stated that the amount covers the use of the bulldozer to level the allegedly unlicensed homes.

Rabin: 28 Israeli Jews Killed During *Intifadah*

Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin told a June 21 Knesset session that 28 Israeli Jews, including eight soldiers, have been killed since the start of the Palestinian *Intifadah* in December 1987. Rabin disclosed that 12 civilians and two soldiers have been killed inside the green line, while eight civilians and six soldiers died on the West Bank. There were no losses of Israeli lives in Gaza. [This figure dos not include the 12 Israelis who were killed when a Palestinian civilian grabbed the steering wheel of an Israeli bus and sent it hurtling into a ravine along the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway on July 26.]

New Detention Camp to Open in Gaza

The Israeli military authorities are setting up a new detention camp for Gazans to relieve overcrowding at Ansar-II in Gaza and Ansar-III in the Negev Desert. The site of the new prison camp is close to the military commander's office in Khan Younis.

Most Israelis Believe that Political Solution Needed to End *Intifadah*

A poll taken by the Dahaf Institute in early June indicates that 36 percent of those polled said the *Intifadah* can be liquidated by military means only. However, 62 percent were of the opinion that the Palestinian Uprising cannot be terminated without a political solution, and that military means can only temporarily mitigate the *Intifadah*.

West Bank Schools Open Only 50 Days in 1988

A Palestinian education officer told a Knesset committee that in 1988, West Bank schools were open for only 50 days, and this year, the students did not attend school at all. He said that the entire academic year might be wasted if schools did not open immediately.

Representatives of right-wing parties supported the continued closing of the schools. However, a Labor party member said that "what goes on in the [Occupied] [T]erritories now is akin to an educational Sabra and Shatila," a reference to the two Palestinian refugee camps near Beirut where hundreds of Palestinians were massacred during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Episcopal Church Supports PLO Peace Initiative

On June 7, Episcopalian Bishop John T. Walker held a Capitol Hill press conference to publicize the Episcopal Church's position on Palestinian-Israeli peace. The Episcopalian Bishop of Washington, D.C. supported Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized borders, affirmed the Palestinian right to self-determination and the establishment of their own state, and called for the convening of an international peace conference. The Bishop also affirmed the importance of promoting justice, peace, and reconciliation for *all* peoples in the region. These points are identical to the proposals made by the PLO in its recent peace initiative.

The press conference kicked off a half-day campaign organized by the Diocese of Washington's Commission on Peace aimed at acquainting the nation's lawmakers with the content of the Episcopal Church's resolution. About 85 members of the Episcopal laity joined Bishop Walker in lobbying key members of Congress, urging support for many of the the PLO's positions.

The Jewish Community Council of Washington, D.C. issued a statement in which it said it was "shocked and dismayed" by the Episcopal Church's action.

Israeli Army to Demolish "Unlicensed" Mosque

According to local sources, on June 7 the Israeli occupation authorities decided to demolish the Hassan Ben Thabet Mosque in the village of Saeer, near Hebron. The demolition is planned, the Israeli occupation authorities claimed, because the mosque was built without a permit.

State of Palestine Asks to Sign Fourth Geneva Convention

In mid-May, the State of Palestine asked the Swiss Foreign Ministry to circulate among U.N. member states a Palestinian application to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, according to WAFA news service.

Critics of Israel's occupation have commonly cited the accord to protest such practices as collective punishments, deportations, curfews and house demolitions—all expressly forbidden by the convention. It also forbids an occupying power from establishing settlements, and demands that refugees be allowed to return to their homes.

Israel, which is among the 166 countries to have signed the 1949 accords, has argued that they apply only to the seizure of territory belonging to another party to the convention, and that Jordan and Egypt, which held the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, did not have good title to those lands.

Former U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Admits to Holding 35 Meetings with PLO Officials

In August 1979, Andrew Young lost his job as U.S. representative to the United Nations for violating U.S. policy not to engage in diplomatic contacts with the PLO. But according to a June 4 article in *The Washington Post*, Young was not the only member of the diplomatic corps to have diplomatic contact with the PLO. John Gunther Dean, U.S. ambassador to Lebanon between 1978 and 1981, held 35 meetings with PLO officials, including Khalil Al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), which were sanctioned by then Secretary of State Cyrus Vance.

Dean claimed that he was making these authorized meetings public to show the American public that there is "another side" to the PLO. He spoke about the PLO's role in protecting him as the representative of a friendly foreign government: "they'd advise whether [a certain excursion] was safe or not and send an armed escort." Dean also described Khalil Al-Wazir as "a soldier and a well-trained officer who kept his word with me and was helpful to the U.S."

South Africa Supplies Irish Extremists with Israeli Weapons

South Africa bought some of the weapons it supplied to Protestant extremist groups in British-ruled Northern Ireland from Israel, according to British Member of Parliament Seamus Mallon and British press reports. South Africa made the weapons shipments to the extremists in return for a model of a British Blowpipe surface-to-surface missile.

The deal was exposed when a South African diplomat and three extremists were arrested, red-handed, in Paris in April. It was subsequently reported in Britain that the Israeli secret service, *Mossad*, had helped the government of South Africa to obtain a number of missile components from the Shorts Brothers plant in Belfast. It was also reported that Israel and South Africa, which frequently collaborate on weapons production, were believed to be trying to copy the British technology for their own joint development of high-speed missiles for ground- and air-launching.

U.S. May Be Trying to Restrict Israel's Nuclear Weapons Program

There is evidence that Washington is taking steps to restrain Israel's nuclear weapons program. In May, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* reported that Israeli sources believe U.S. refusal to clear supercomputers for export to the Technion, Weizmann Institute of Science, and Hebrew University of Jerusalem is related to Israel's refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The computers can be used to design nuclear weapons. This supports an earlier report—denied by Israel—that the Bush administration has restricted Israeli scientists' access to U.S. nuclear weapons laboratories.

Pentagon is Largest Buyer of Some Israeli-Made Armaments

Israel's declining military budget will result in a strange situation this year: Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI), Israel's largest weapons manufacturer, will sell more arms—$300 million worth—to the Pentagon than to the Israeli Defense Ministry. Last year, the Israeli army made purchases worth $290 million from IAI. According to IAI predictions, total revenues for 1989 will be $1.25 billion, with exports accounting for $950 million of that amount.

Boeing to Open Spare Parts Plant in Israel

Israeli Minister of Communications Moshe Katsav concluded an agreement with the Boeing Company to set up a spare parts manufacturing plant in Israel, according to the Israeli daily *Yediot Ahronot*. The plant will be established in cooperation with the Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI).

Israel in Latin America: Selling Arms and Training Right-wing Armies

Colombia has taken delivery of 13 *Kfir* fighter aircraft from Israel, and the Chilean Navy has put into service two missile boats, bought second-hand from Israel, which originally came from France. Meanwhile, an exiled Panamanian opposition leader, Carlos Gonzalez de la Lastra, said on a London television program that Mike Harari, a longtime Israeli "advisor" in Panama, was still training the Panamanian military, despite U.S. efforts to unseat the military chief, Gen. Manuel Noriega. For the past two years, the United States has been asking Israel to recall Harari.

Israel Seeking New Links with Post-Khomeini Iran

The Israeli daily *Hadashot* has reported that Israel is seeking new channels for dialogue with the new Iranian government, in the wake of Khomeini's death. The paper added that Israeli experts have examined the implications and repercussions resulting from the appointment of Ali Khamenei as Khomeini's successor.

The daily quoted Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin as saying he supports "a new understanding and channels of communication," with the new Iranian regime, because "Iran has a strategic importance, and Israel is committed to do its best to renew contacts with it."

Settlers Attack Israeli Leaders

According to an Israel Television reporter, Jewish settlers tried to attack Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, and "raised their hands against Israeli soldiers" who tried to protect a Mapam party official during the June 20 funeral of the slain Israeli settler, Friedrich Rosenfeld. The settlers beat the secretary of the Mapam party youth movement, who was there to pay his respects to Rosenfeld. The Mapam party has sharply criticized the settlers and has called for direct talks with the PLO.

Right-wing parties, like Tsomet and Hatchiah, justified the conduct of the settlers as a direct result of the "hardship they endure due to the continued *Intifadah*." But Peace Now and other left-of-center movements castigated the extremists' behavior, and the Labor party simply expressed regrets.

Knesset Member Binyamin Ben Eliazer said that he does not discount the possibility that settlers might issue orders to "murder Knesset members and army officers."

—compiled by Michael Hindi

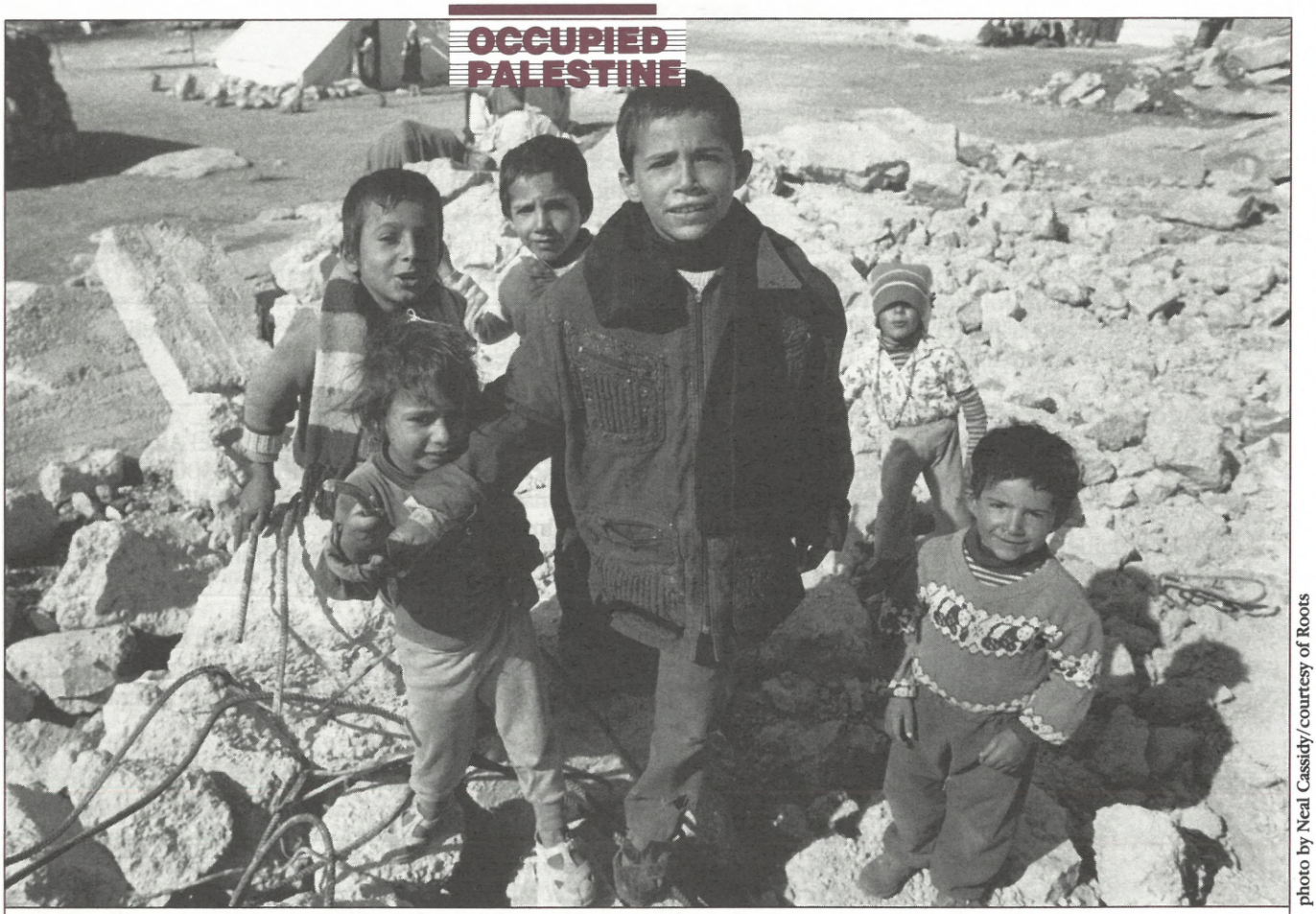

photo by Neal Cassidy/courtesy of Roots

Children standing in the rubble of their demolished home in the village of Kissan, West Bank. What will become of them?

The Right of Return: A Matter of Heart and Mind

Lesley C. Abu Khater

Yousef's pride kept his tears from spilling over, at least in front of me. I watched as his two-year-old son sat with his tiny hand pressed against the stubble on his father's cheek, as he sensed the trouble Yousef had in expressing himself:

> I remember driving north from Dheisheh (a refugee camp south of Bethlehem where Yousef's family found itself after 1948—and where he was born) with my uncle, not long after the [November 1988 Palestine National Council] PNC meeting in Algiers. We drove slowly, up past Nablus and then around to Tulkarem and Qalqilyah, just skirting the "green line," before heading due west to Tel Aviv. At Tulkarem, my uncle began to speak. "We've done it, haven't we?" he said. "The child that couldn't be divided has been. We, unlike Solomon, have cut the baby in two."
>
> He stopped the car and pointed north. "Over there," he said, "was my father's village. How can I cut myself off from it now, and say it will never again be Palestine? This road on which we are driving was a regular route of his. His donkey took him the famed route from the Nazareth area south to Bethlehem many a year. Am I not disowning him, disowning my history, by dividing Palestine in two?"

Yousef, I knew, was asking himself that very question. I did not ask

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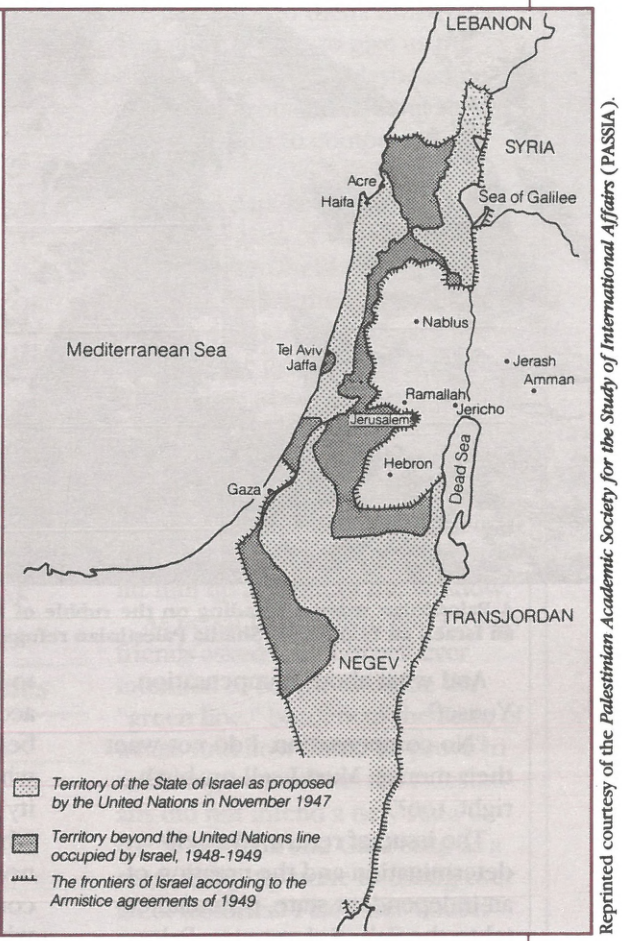
it, nor did I demand an answer of him. He had already told me that there was a difference in the questions he allowed his heart to ask, and the answers he allowed his mind to give. However, this all began because I asked him about his right as a Palestinian refugee, to return to land farmed by his ancestors, located within what the PLO has now recognized as the State of Israel. Did he demand that right, and if so, did he intend to exercise it, or did he intend to accept compensation? Yousef was long in answering.

This was not the first time I had seen a man cry in Dheisheh camp. Several months before, I had sat with Yousef's cousin, Mohammad, who lived in the concrete hut up the hill. He was meeting a group of Israelis from *New Outlook* magazine who wanted to get a firsthand look at the *Intifadah*.

An Israeli friend of mine, Gadi Sternbach, a tour guide who tries to introduce Holy Land pilgrims to the needs of the refugees, sat watching Mohammad closely as he spoke. Mohammad was telling the group how his father had taken him back several times to the place where their village had stood, just south of Jerusalem, on the way to Gaza, and pointed out familiar landmarks. "What was the name of your village?" asked Gadi. "Zacharia," said Mohammad. And then it happened again, a man began to cry—but not Mohammad—Gadi.

"You knew it?" asked Mohammad, looking incredulously at this Israeli in tears at the mention of his village. "Yes," Gadi answered. "The land I farm once belonged to Zacharia." For the next few minutes, as the rest of us watched in wonder, these two men—one Palestinian, the other Israeli—discussed a piece of land they both laid claim to. They resolved to return together at one point, and spend the day walking over the fields, looking for the landmarks Mohammad's father had shown him. As yet, the visit has not taken place.

For most Palestinians, the right of return is not only a matter of abstract principle, but involves some very concrete personal decisions.



Reprinted courtesy of the *Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs* (PASSIA).

Though one can find hope in the scene of two adversaries walking as friends across a stretch of land they both could probably share, the reality is that the bigger picture, of which this scene is only a part, involves bigger problems. And this issue of the Palestinian right of return in the event of a peace settlement is one of its thorniest. For both peoples, the issue is emotionally charged. Israelis *en masse* refuse to recognize such a right fearing that thousands of Palestinians would want to return to Haifa and Jaffa. Some Israelis even oppose the right of return for Palestinians in the diaspora to the new state to be created in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Palestinians *en masse* demand at least the recognition of this right, many explaining that they do not expect to be able to return anyway, but to be compensated instead.

Yousef said it was crucial for him to have his right of return acknowledged, maybe to pitch a tent, maybe just to walk his son around the fields of Zacharia as his elders had walked him. "But do you really intend to return to a village that no longer stands, Yousef, and be under Israeli rule at that?" I asked.

What I have to say to you comes in two parts: the emotional and the political. . . . I will die wanting to physically return to Zacharia, but I will remain here in Dheisheh even if a Palestinian state is established in the West Bank. Dheisheh is where we live now, but my son will always know he comes from Zacharia. When we have a state, we will fix up Dheisheh and it will become a decent place to live, and we will go from time to time on little trips to Zacharia to visit, but I know that we will not return to live there. . . . This is an answer I give with my mind.

photo by Said Elatab/Middle East Photo

A Palestinian woman standing on the rubble of her destroyed home following an Israeli air raid on the Shatila Palestinian refugee camp.

And what about compensation, Yousef?

"No compensation. I do not want their money. Must I sell my birthright, too?"

The issue of return, like self-determination and the creation of an independent state, is fundamental to the Palestinian cause. Palestinian lawyer Jonathan Kuttab gives the dictionary definition as—

> the right of every Palestinian who was born in this land or whose ancestors were born here and who is currently prevented from being here by a racist law, to return and live here if he wishes regardless of whether he is Christian, Muslim, or Jewish.
>
> Presently, people of the Jewish faith or ethnicity claim this right on the basis of having lived here 2,000 years ago. That right makes much more sense for those who within our lifetime have been forcibly evicted.
>
> I think whereas the right itself is basic and nonnegotiable, its implementation is subject to political realities and agreement. These agreements must be negotiated between the Israelis and the PLO. Among the factors that have to be realistically taken into account are Israel's fears of being demographically overwhelmed, Palestinian insecurity in some of the places where they now reside, the need for family reunification, compensation for property which is not feasibly returnable to its original owners, and the difficulties of absorption of large numbers of people. All the above translates into considering that all Palestinians have the right of return or compensation, and that mechanisms should be established for the priorities of exercising that right.

Kuttab himself is not a refugee like Yousef, but Odeh Rantisi is. Reverend Rantisi, an Anglican pastor who established and runs the Evangelical School for Boys in Ramallah, on the West Bank, was forced at gunpoint out of his family's home in Lod. He was 10 years old at the time. Just recently, the Israeli occupation authorities tore down his family's home.

Yet, traces of his family and community remain. There is a Christian Arab Center in Lod that he is still involved with. "I want to work there. I want to help my people there. They are the remnants," he answers when asked to contemplate the issue of return. His British-born wife, Pat, watches him closely across the dining table as he answers the question. She seems more uncertain about a move from Ramallah in the West Bank to Lod inside Israel. "We don't speak the language. Things are different there," she says.

Nehaya Al-Helu, a journalist with *Al-Fajr English Weekly* in Jerusalem, says she wants her grandfather's home in what was the village of Lifta, now part of greater West Jerusalem, back. But when asked what she will do about living on the other side of the "green line" in a rather hostile environment, she says she will work in the State of Palestine and keep Lifta as a summer home, or maybe she will turn the home, now an Israeli school, into "a museum of Palestinian culture."

Nora Kort, an employee of the private voluntary agency Catholic Relief Services, defines the right of return as "getting back to my ancestor's home and regaining what was lost." Her family lost a home in West Jerusalem, 30 dunums of land, and a church. A zionist cultural center now stands on the land and the church has been converted into Israeli office space. "The altar is now a bathroom," she says. If she is not given back what is rightfully hers, will she accept compensation? "We will never accept compensation," she says. "How can you treat people on an equal footing, if you don't give them back what they owned?

Musa Saba, director of the YMCA in Gaza, was uprooted from his home in Beer Sheba at the age of 20, in 1948. Does he want his home back? "I want everything, but can I get everything? . . . We have to compromise, things have changed in 40 years," he says. Would he want to return to live there, across the "green line?" He answers, "Why go back to Israeli control if the Israeli Arabs are oppressed?" Just give him the Palestinian state, he explains, and everything else is negotiable.

For most Palestinians, the right of return is not only a matter of abstract principle, but involves some very concrete personal decisions. They say they are willing to make them, if the Israelis are just willing to sit with the PLO and negotiate.

All they need to do is implement U.N. Security Council Resolution 194, which calls for the right of return to those who want it and compensation to those who do not, advises a former UNRWA official living in Jerusalem. He is unaware that Israel's Labor leader Abba Eban has claimed in a recent interview that Resolution 273, which recognizes Israel as a sovereign state, nullifies 194 and the right of return.

Even if he were aware of Eban's claim, one gets the feeling it would not deter him. "Any Palestinian state should have as its first article of constitution the right of every Palestinian to return to the land," he says, adding, "But I think many of them will think many, many times before they start to come back." Will the refugee from Haifa come back if he knows he is only coming to Nablus? "Maybe yes, maybe no," he says.

Ex-political prisoner, Ali Jedda, agrees. "We will not be dogmatic.... We won't say to them 'move out.' The main issue is to give us the right to come back. Maybe some of us will and some won't, but they have the right to compensation," he says.

Reverend Rantisi, an Anglican pastor who established and runs the Evangelical School for Boys in Ramallah, on the West Bank, was forced at gunpoint out of his family's home in Lod. He was 10 years old at the time. Just recently, the Israeli occupation authorities tore down his family's home.

Several days later, Yousef poured me a cool glass of water on a sweltering day in Dheisheh. We sat under a tree on the small plot of land he considers a backyard. He spoke of the green beans and tomatoes he had planted, boasting yet in an apologetic tone to some visiting German friends that his was perhaps the largest plot in the camp. His son called out to him from inside the house and Yousef went to lift him up and out of the window.

As he sat back down, his German friends asked if he himself ever intended to return to inside the "green line," borders of the State of Israel. And how could he prove to doubting Israelis that the Palestinians did not intend a new state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a mere stepping stone to taking over all of historical Palestine? Yousef looked at me and then at his son—I felt as if I were seeing him turn the key on his heart. Yousef smiled, held out a glass of cool water, and offered up an answer from his mind. □

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When Parenting Becomes a Moral Minefield:

Palestinian Parents Struggle to Guide "The Children of the Stones"

Kate B. Rouhana

The other day an army jeep passed by. We had a house full of guests. I heard raised voices, and I ran out to see what was up. I found Sharif,* my five-year-old son, on the doorstep, his face as red as a beet, holding a stone in each small hand and raising them threateningly.

The jeep screeched to a halt and four Israeli soldiers rushed out and surrounded Sharif. "What are you doing here?" they shouted. "Who taught you to do that?" "What is your name?" He wouldn't answer.

"Why do you want to throw stones at us?"

"Because you put my sister in jail."

"Who told you to throw stones?" No answer. "Why don't you cry? Aren't you scared?" they taunted.

"I don't want to cry," he answered. But his face was so red, I knew he did. They started pushing him around. If I hadn't been standing there, they would have hit him.

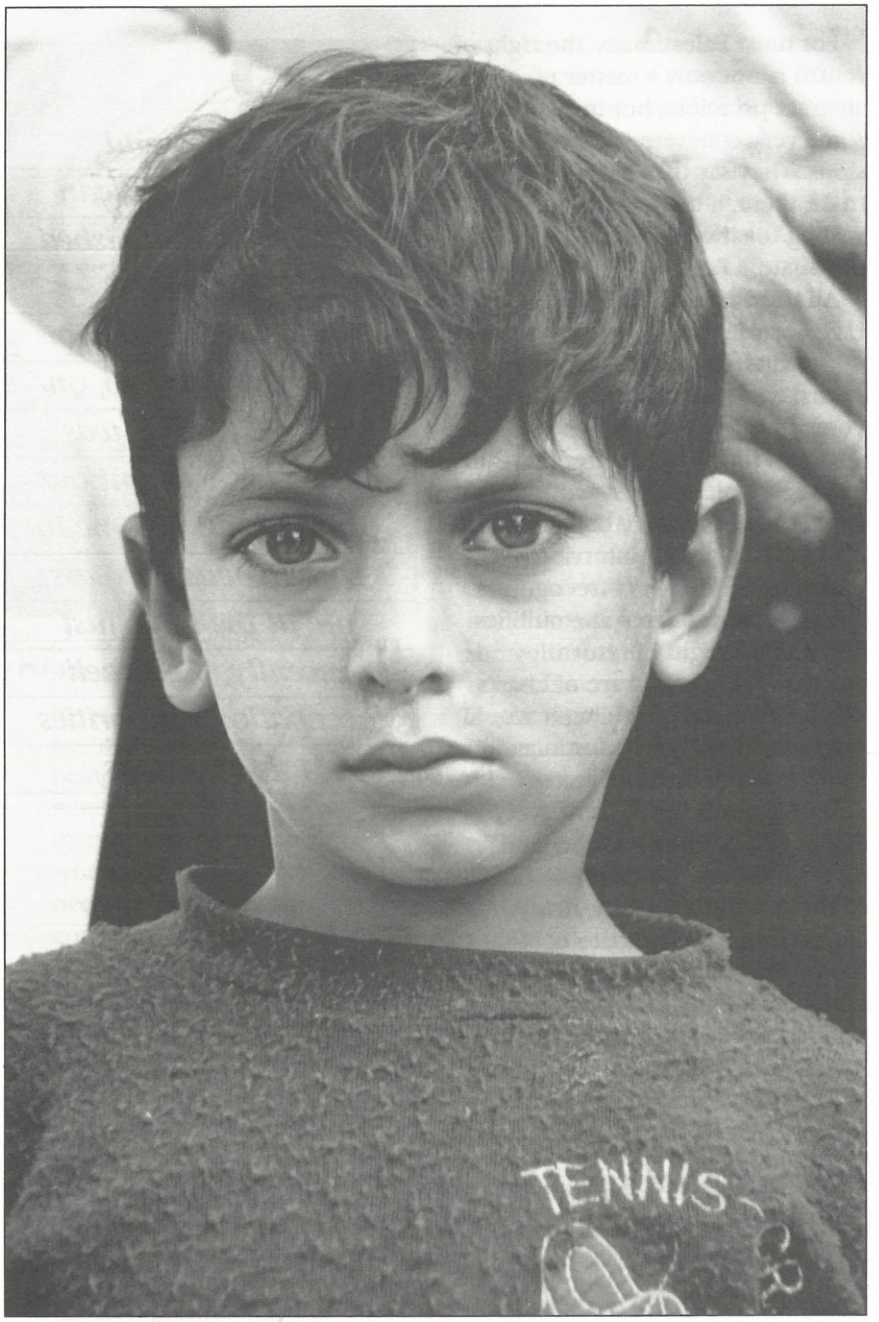
His older brother came out and stood next to me. They asked, "Is this who taught you?"

"No, he didn't teach me."

"What's your name?"

"I don't want to tell you my name."

"If you throw a stone again, we will beat you up and take you to jail. Don't throw stones!" Sharif didn't say a word.



A Palestinian boy whose house was demolished two days earlier by the Israeli army in the Jabalya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. photo by Neal Cassidy/courtesy of Roots

Lina, a Palestinian mother in Jerusalem, was describing a scene that Palestinian parents in occupied Palestine must face every day. On one hand, children are a driving force behind the *Intifadah*, or Uprising. Youngsters do the bulk of the actual confrontation—throwing stones and firebombs, burning tires, erecting roadblocks, spraying graffiti on homes and storefronts, and hanging Palestinian flags.

On the other hand, the Israeli army insists that parents control

Kate B. Rouhana is a freelance writer living in Arlington, Massachusetts.

*All names have been changed.

their children or pay a steep price for their actions. If the army suspects that a child threw a firebomb, his family's home can be demolished or sealed even before he has been tried or convicted.

The army's frustration with the gumption of these youngsters is so great that it is enough for Palestinian children just to be in the wrong place at the wrong time to find themselves in serious trouble. Lately, young children are being swept up off the streets and held until their parents pay a stipulated fine, ranging from $1,000-$2,000, a sum which few people have, especially these days. Furthermore, when parents claim their children and hand over the money, they must sign a statement taking responsibility for their children's behavior for one year. If, at the end of that time, the child has not been caught engaging in any harmful activity, the parents are ostensibly entitled to a refund. Otherwise, the Israeli occupation authorities keep the money and treat it as a fine.

And children pay a high price too. They can be seized for military questioning or pummeling at any time. If they are under 13 years of age, according to Israeli attorney Lea Tsemel, they will be held overnight, often beaten, and then released. If they are over 13, they are subject to judicial prosecution on the same terms as adults. That means they will be pressured (brutally) to sign a confession in Hebrew, which they cannot read. They will probably receive a sentence, whether they sign a confession or not. Today, stone-throwing can be punished by jail terms of up to three years.

With such turbulent forces sweeping through their neighborhoods and their own homes, parents say controlling the children is neither feasible nor desirable. After all they do not want to appear in any way, not even to their children, as doing anything to hinder the *Intifadah*, which is a source of so much national pride. So they walk

With such turbulent forces sweeping through their neighborhoods and their own homes, parents say controlling the children is neither feasible nor desirable.

the moral tightrope between trying to keep their children safe and sound, and doing what they can to sanction their children's contributions to the *Intifadah*.

Lina notes—

> Everything we do here is the *Intifadah*. If you stay home, if you go outside, if you drive in the car, if you go to your friend's house for a visit all, *all* we talk about is the *Intifadah*. This person died, that one is hospitalized, this one was jailed, that one's house was demolished. After hearing all of this, you find it so absurd to come to your son and tell him, "No, you may not throw stones—but the neighbor's son may." It's impossible.
>
> At the age of three, Sharif had a life-altering experience when [Israeli] soldiers came to the house to detain his father at the beginning of the *Intifadah*.
>
> He still remembers all the details of the arrest. He'll tell you—"they came in, held a gun to my father's head, demanded his ID, and searched the house." The next morning, when Sharif asked where Daddy was, I told him he'd been arrested—You know, just like those people we see on TV all the time. Sharif started shouting and cursing at the top of his lungs, and kept on for quite a while.
>
> After that, every time we would go to visit the prison, Sharif would draw a secret map to aid him in freeing his father. To this day, he somehow believes that he and the lawyer freed my husband from prison by breaking the iron bars of his cell.

Union activist Akram and his wife Hiam neither hope nor wish to keep their three children out of the center of the storm. Hiam explains—

> We can't stop our children from going out. Daily, we see scenes on TV of what the soldiers do to children. We get nervous, agitated, depressed. My daughter asks, "If that was me, what would you do?" I tell her, "What can we do, we're just like everyone else." The time will come, it seems when we all will go out in the streets.

For Akram and Hiam, the time did come. Their 14-year-old daughter, Nadia, was arrested and charged with throwing a stone on a main street in Jerusalem. She and two girlfriends repeatedly denied the charges. She was detained and interrogated for 12 days. Not knowing what else to do, the judge ordered the girls to remain under house arrest for six or seven months, until their trial. If the two girls leave their homes, they can be arrested again. This means losing a year of school, and Nadia was explicitly forbidden to keep up with her schoolwork at home.

"I can't tell her no," said Hiam. "If she wanted to throw a stone, she wouldn't consult me." And Akram continues—

> We are in the middle of a popular Uprising. I can't read my children's minds. Naturally, there are things they hide from me. I can't tell them not to take an action, but I can warn them about the consequences.

Akram himself is no stranger to consequences. He was jailed for eight years in the late 1970s for political activity, and again for 16 months—without charges—just after the *Intifadah* broke out. His daughter, who is now awaiting her own trial, grew up without her father—she was three months old at the time of his first arrest. She was also the one to open the front door in the middle of the night when the soldiers came the second time around. She says that that was the point at which she got so angry that she stopped feeling afraid.

The *Intifadah*, or "shaking out" in Arabic, is not only the shaking out of Israeli occupation, it is also the shedding of a myriad of restrictive societal norms. As the Palestinians are asserting their nationhood, so too are Palestinian women beginning to assert themselves against male-dominated society, the young against ineffective elders, and children against their formerly authoritarian parents and families. The social order has been turned on its head.

According to Nora Kurt, director of the Jerusalem office of the Catholic Relief Services—

> Before the *Intifadah*, the pecking order at home was as follows: Elder man (usually father) first, wage earner (usually the son) next, followed by mother, and last, by younger children. Now it has been exactly reversed.

By taking to the streets and rallying a successful popular uprising—which has scored an impressive array of political achievements and arguably turned the diplomatic situation in the Middle East around 180 degrees—children, once very oppressed within the society, have empowered themselves as well as their nation. According to Francis Azraq, a psychoanalyst who works with children at Jerusalem's Orthodox Polyclinic Hospital—

> The children have broken the military force that was dominating the patriarchal society and family policy. They have discovered that the power of the soldiers was a myth, as was the power of the family. They have discovered that they were the ones to give the adults their power of control and self-denial. We are witnessing a complete internal revolution of all social aspects of an order that existed for centuries. The adolescent is taking his place in the family. His words are respected, even the patriarch honors him, and he [the adolescent] brings the family power and glory.

A Palestinian child being arrested by Israeli riot police in the Old City of Jerusalem. file photo

Jumana and Ghassan, a West Bank couple, are grappling with these changes with their son, Sami, who is now 13 years old. A university professor, Ghassan is about as high up on the social and economic ladder as one can get in a society that has neither government nor business sector. Their spacious two-story home looks out over a valley with a spectacular view. Nearby is a small innocuous road that leads to a Jewish settlement. Because it is frequently traveled by settlers, whose cars are distinguishable by their yellow license plates, the road is a hub of activity for the local "*shabab*"—the politically organized teenagers—the real stone-throwers.

Ghassan only had time to speak briefly before heading out to an appointment.

> We tell Sami there are many ways to contribute to the *Intifadah*. He can make just as much of a contribution through science and [use of] his brains as by throwing a stone. But he doesn't see that. Next year he will be in the streets. At least he is open with us. We will never tell him no or forbid him to go out. I want him to continue to confide in me. I wouldn't take him away from the situation, he has to face it. If he wants to be involved, though, it should be only when he is personally convinced. Not under pressure from his friends.
>
> Sami realizes the risks involved. This is [really] happening to us. It's not something on TV. He's watched the soldiers break into our home and arrest me. That helped him understand how seriously they take things and how easy it is to get into open confrontation.

Ghassan turned a bit and looked out the window.

> To tell you the truth, I feel I have not been a good father. I've failed because I haven't been around enough.

Ghassan's community activity at the outset of the *Intifadah* landed him in administrative detention, with out charges or trial, for seven months. He is remorseful about leaving so much on his wife's shoulders, although there's little he could have done to avoid being arrested. "She's the real expert," he tells me. "Ask her.'

Jumana has indeed given these issues extensive thought. She is a calm and self-possessed woman. Nevertheless, she showed signs of stress in her eyes and her exasperated sighs.

> We have explained to Sami that we don't like violence, and we don't want him to throw stones. We can respect [the *Intifadah*] and do our part in the *Intifadah*, but it's

not necessary to throw stones. That's how we tried to present it—some children throw stones, others do other things—you do the other things. We bought him a computer, ping pong, a pool table, Atari games, and all kinds of books and equipment to keep him busy—and at home.

At first, there were demonstrations in the town and we would all go out and march together to a certain point. The *shabab* would go on alone and erect barricades while the parents and the younger children stayed behind. They [the children] felt they were taking part, but they were under our protection. Later the army tried to prevent these marches any way they could.

Sami began to want to do more. When things got really hot in the neighborhood. I'd try to let him do little things, simple harmless things, so he could feel he had done something and be proud to have played his part. When all of the children in the neighborhood were involved in something, I'd let him go along. Like under curfew. All of the children in our neighborhood, including the girls, would leave their homes and put up stone barriers in the street to stop the army from coming in. Then they'd run and hide, and after the soldiers had removed the stones and gone on, they'd be out there putting them up again. Sami got the feeling he had participated, without endangering himself or taking part in real violence.

But after my husband was imprisoned, things got tougher, I was alone. Sami felt he had to protest his father's imprisonment. His friends would tell him, "It's shameful that your father is in jail and you are not taking a more active part." He was caught between two imperatives—his duty to act, and his fear that his actions would make our problems worse. "It's enough to have one problem, that your father is in prison," I told him. "Now you need to be even more subtle, more alert, more sophisticated about how you take part." That's what I told him—repeatedly, because he's young. But I don't know how long he will listen."

At that point, Sami left the house without a word. Jumana jumped up and tried to tell him to stay in. But he just kept going around the corner and out of sight. Nervously, she moved to the window to watch him, making sure he was not heading for the nearby settlement road. Reassured, she sat down again, but I could tell that she was partially outside with him, willing him to stay put in their own back yard. However, Jumana continued:

> The military's closure of schools has made life very difficult for a parent. The children have so much free time and no order to their day. If they went back to school, they would be kept busy in classes and by doing their homework for most of the day. They'd have no time to be out on the streets.

Now, her children have no interest in any of the many activities, books, and games they have in the house, even sports, which once kept them entertained for hours. They cannot concentrate inside for more than a few minutes.

All day long Sami is out in the street, with his friends, or looking out the front veranda for the soldiers, or out the back veranda for the soldiers—"that's our life now."

As I left their house, I noticed Sami had drifted over to the settlement road. Not a car was in sight, but Sami was there watching and waiting. □

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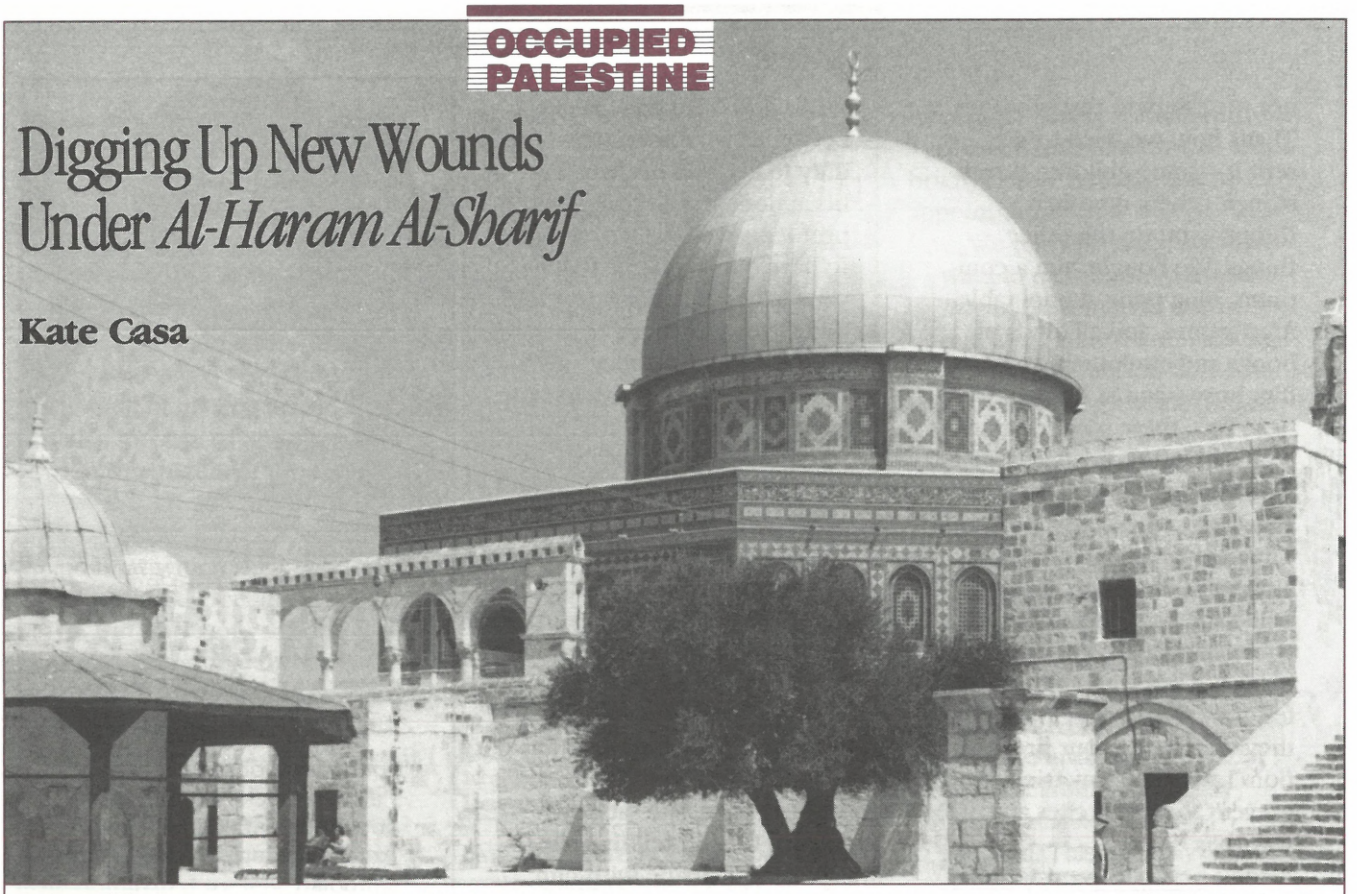
Digging Up New Wounds Under *Al-Haram Al-Sharif*

Kate Casa



A view of the Dome of the Rock in the Old City of Jerusalem. photo by Beverly A. Orr

Even before the *Intifadah* burst onto the scene, the *Al-Haram Al-Sharif* Mosque complex in the Old City of Jerusalem lay like an exposed nerve, subject to quick and violent contractions, perhaps more than any other single site in occupied Palestine. Demonstrations and confrontations regularly rock the 140-dunum compound. It was there, in the tense, unsteady autumn of 1987, that Palestinians got their first whiff of a potent new tear gas that was soon to be unleashed throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. And it was there, at the onset of the *Intifadah*, that journalists took up rooftop positions each Friday at around 12:30 p.m. for shots of the Uprising in action.

A flurry of all-too-graphic international press coverage of those and similar demonstrations prompted Israeli occupation authorities to crack down on journalists' access to the area. Palestinians who own homes surrounding the complex were threatened with violence and arrest if journalists should happen to appear on their roofs on Fridays. And as the *Intifadah* broadened in scope, mosques throughout occupied Palestine became less the focal points as Palestinians wove the Uprising into their daily routines.

A renewed onslaught of unrest began in April at and around *Al-Aqsa* Mosque as Ramadan began. With the new wave of violence, Israeli officials began restricting access to the third holiest site in Islam. Normal Friday crowds of 10,000 to 15,000 worshippers have been pared down to about 4,000—most residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as almost all young male worshippers, are refused entry. But if these particular restrictions are new, they are not unexpected. This ancient plateau known by one name to Muslims and another to Jews is the nerve center of the two religions that covet it. It is the holy heart of the holy city.

On almost any day but Friday, peace and quiet still prevail within the ancient walls of the *Al-Haram Al-Sharif*, known to Jews as the "Temple Mount." Like any other point of passage within occupied Palestine, Israeli police and soldiers conduct rigorous and often harassing gate checks before allowing visitors to enter the compound. But once inside, an unaccustomed calm prevails.

Secluded from the bustle of the Old City's narrow streets—the echoing horns of muffler-less tractors and the side-swipes of stubborn, overburdened donkeys—the pace within the compound is slow and reverent. The children's musical Arabic cascades through the greenery as little legs and bare feet kick at a dusty soccer ball. Old men splash their limbs beneath cool spigots just before going inside the mosques to pray. Young Palestinian mothers, covered in bleach-white head-scarves and full-length dresses, stroll shoulder to shoulder with their eyes on their meandering toddlers.

On Fridays, that calm facade is scratched, and the tensions which

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Kate Casa is a freelance writer who lived in Jerusalem for several years.

throughout the week lie just below the surface—come ominously to the fore. But it is more than a figurative image that depicts the strain pulling at this rectangular parcel of the "Holy Land." It would take little more than a few shovels of dirt to reveal the ongoing conflict that always simmers just below the surface and sometimes brutally spills over.

One early morning in July 1988, archaeologists from the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs turned up on the Via Dolorosa to renew excavations on a section of an underground tunnel that leads from across the city, at the Western Wall, and is believed to continue for several miles outside the walls beneath Arab East Jerusalem. Ministry officials later came under fire for not notifying *Al-Waqf*, the Islamic religious trust which controls the mosque compound, of their intention to renew the excavations. But it is doubtful that even advance warning would have headed off completely the abrupt clashes that ensued when Palestinians noticed the Israeli activity.

For the Palestinians, the Israelis' ongoing attempts to burrow beneath the complex which today houses both *Al-Aqsa* Mosque, and the great, golden Dome of the Rock Mosque, represent more than a religious assault. In the context of institutionalized land "appropriation" and property confiscation throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the creeping Israeli acquisition of buildings in the Muslim and Christian Quarters of the Old City (characterized most notably by Ariel Sharon's dramatic sweep into a residence on Al-Wad Street last year which has now been transformed into a veritable fortress crowned by a giant menorah in the heart of the Arab Souq), it is not unusual that Palestinians see the tunneling as yet another, perhaps more insidious, form of expansionism.

The mosque compound is the exact site, according to Jews, which first housed Solomon's Temple, destroyed more than half a century before Christ, and then Herod's Temple, completed in 520 BC and sacked by the Romans in 70 AD. In the year 638, Caliph Omar built a temporary house of worship on the spot, and 50 years later, Caliph Abd Al-Malek constructed the stunning mosque which dominates the complex today. The Dome of the Rock, an elaborate gilded cupola atop slabs of marble and intricate tile mosaics, enshrines a boulder on which it is said the prophet Abraham intended to sacrifice his son Isaac. Islamic history maintains that Mohammad rode his horse to the same boulder thousands of years later, where he ascended into heaven. On the corner of the stone is a mark said to be the imprint of the prophet's foot.

One group of rigorously observant Jews has dedicated itself to the rebuilding of the temple, and has already raised at least $60,000, primarily from American Jews, in the name of the "Temple Institute."

The Western (or "Wailing") Wall, the Jews' holiest shrine, is the only remaining above-ground section of the defense wall that once encircled the temple complex. It is there that Jews from around the world flock to pray, at the closest point to the site they call the "Holy of Hollies."

Excavations to the south and northwest of the compound have been going on since Israel occupied the area in 1967. Those to the northwest, conducted by Hebrew University, have netted some valid archaeological finds significant to the history of Judaism. But results to the south, where after 11 years the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs plans to continue excavating, have resulted in artifacts only from Jerusalem's Islamic and Roman periods. These are considered so insignificant or counter to the purpose of the excavations that they are not displayed in any Israeli museum. An Israeli tour guide noted during a tour of the tunnel that he knew of no "really startling" finds there. So the question remains as to why Israelis continue to push for excavations that have dangerously destabilized seven Arab buildings dating back more than 600 years, and which continue to incite violent passions on both sides of the issue.

The answer is not clear, and certainly involves no part of stated government policy. In fact at times, Israeli officials have been instrumental in blocking members of the radical Kach movement from their regular attempts to pray in and hoist the Israeli flag over the Muslim holy sites. And Israeli police have repeatedly prevented would-be archaeologists within the same movement from reopening the controversial excavation site near the Via Dolorosa.

On the other hand, indicators of the intentions of some Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jews are readily apparent. One real estate office in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City unabashedly displays a drawing of the *Third* Temple—as specified in the Old Testament, to be built on the site of its two predecessors—with a sign below it in English that reads, "What every Jew has prayed for 2,000 years."

A tour agency solicits donations with the pledge that construction of the temple will begin before the year 2000. And at least one group of rigorously observant Jews has dedicated itself to the rebuilding of the temple, and has already raised

The Western (or "Wailing") Wall, Judaism's holiest shrine, marks the western edge of the *Haram Al-Sharif*. photo by Beverly A. Orr

at least $60,000, primarily from American Jews, in the name of the "Temple Institute."

The institute's endeavor was featured in a recent Sunday edition of *The New York Times*. Its leader, Rabbi Yisrael Ariel, told the paper that his group is presently occupied with constructing and displaying ornaments and furnishings similar to the ones that once adorned Herod's Temple and its priest. "We're promised by the prophets of Israel that the temple will be rebuilt," Ariel is quoted as saying. He adds, "Everything here is so real that if the Messiah comes in the middle of our talk and says, 'I'm building a temple now,' he can take anything he wants from this exhibition and use it in the temple."

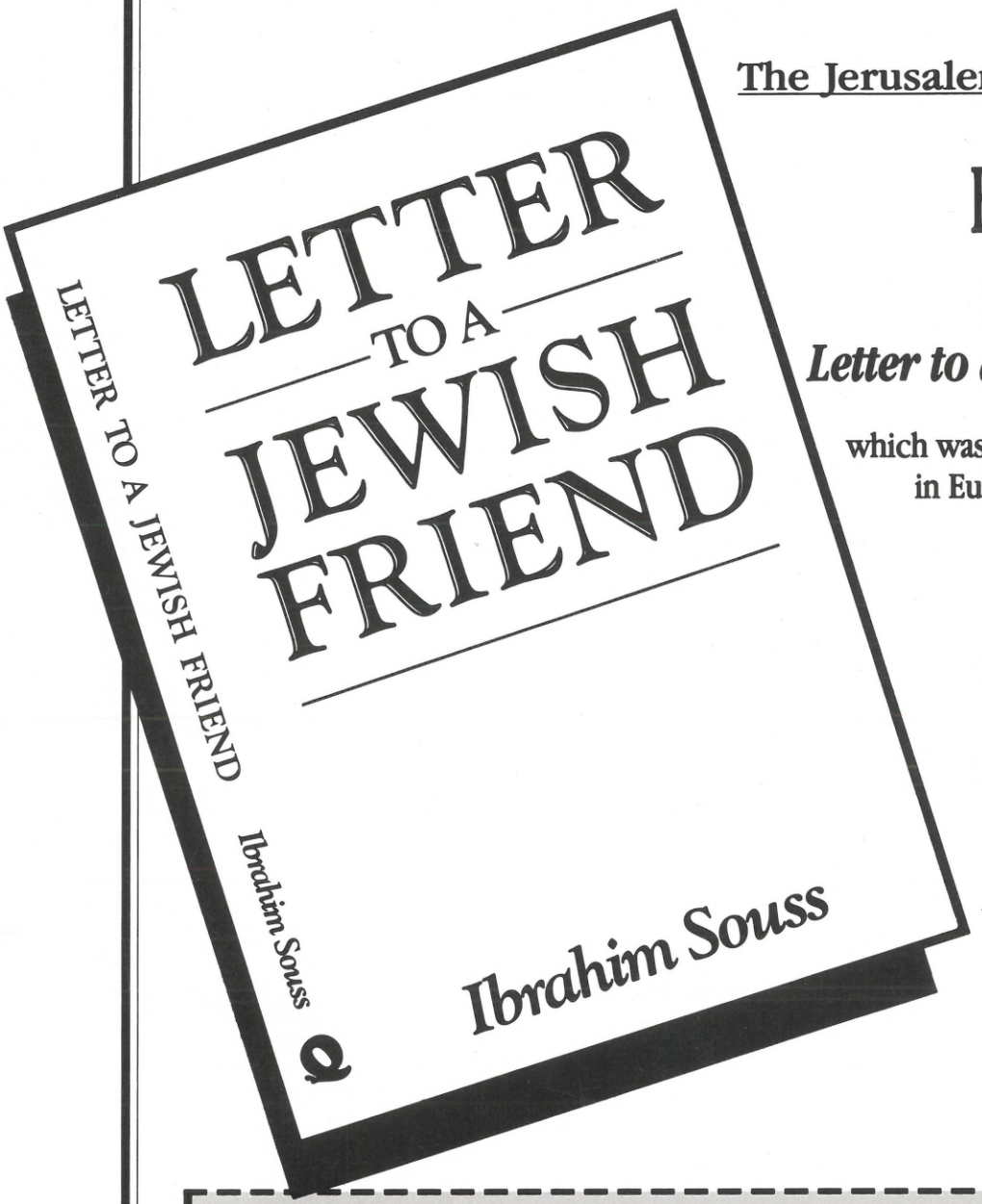
But the indications are not solely in the exacting preparations of the Temple Institute. Few Palestinians were informed of the tunnel excavations as they proceeded over the course of the past decade. Many became aware of them only when huge cracks began to appear along stairwells and foundations of the *Al-Haram Al-Sharif* complex. One elderly woman whose home sits directly over the tunnel recalls the morning she stepped out her front door to toss some garbage into the container that always sat there, only to find that the trash can had been swallowed up by a large hole which spontaneously opened up during the night.

Then in 1981, Rabbi Rob Goetz and his followers dug an eastern offshoot from the tunnel through an ancient water cistern, making some 20 meters of headway underground toward the Dome of the Rock before *Al-Waqf* officials intercepted them and eventually sealed off the passageway. A guide conducting tourists past the cemented punctuation of Goetz's effort last summer referred to it as "the most frustrating block of concrete in the entire city of Jerusalem." Asked to speculate as to what archaeological valuables might lie beyond it, the guide, an archaeologist, replied that he did not know.

While Goetz's efforts have for now been thwarted, he has succeeded in building a subterranean synagogue at the westernmost point of the tunnel which was opened to the public last July.

Dr. Adnan Husseini, *Al-Waqf*'s chief engineer, says the religious trust is not necessarily opposed *per se* to a tunnel beneath the *Al-Haram Al-Sharif*, but rather opposes the use of that tunnel by Jewish religious extremists. "To further open a tunnel inside the most crowded section of the Muslim Quarter and under one of the main paths to the mosque is to deliberately create tension," Husseini said during an interview. Maps in Husseini's office are smudged with seven large, black spots indicating the buildings—including *Al Waqf*'s main offices—that have been seriously damaged as a result of the existing tunnel. "These buildings date back to the *Mameluke* period," the engineer pointed out. "Does it make sense to lose one important structure or culture to try and find another underneath it?"

But Husseini has little time for further speculation. A steady stream of Palestinians flows through his office daily, many reporting Israeli offers to purchase their property at highly inflated prices. While *Al-Waqf* is sometimes able to counter the offers, it is not always easy to compete with them. The best the agency can do at this point, Husseini points out, is to try and maintain the status quo—an unenviable task when pressures encroach, quite literally, from all sides. □



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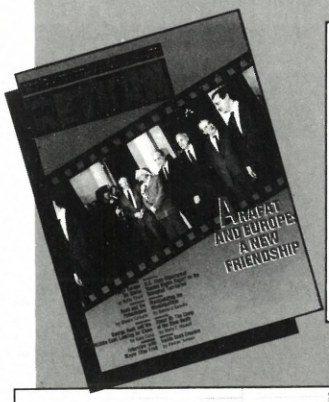

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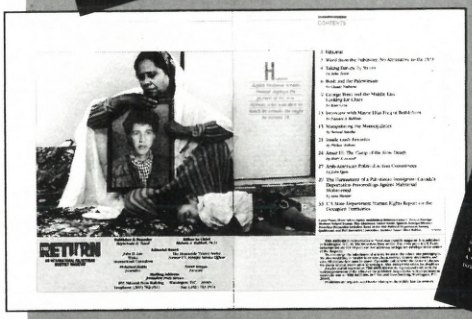

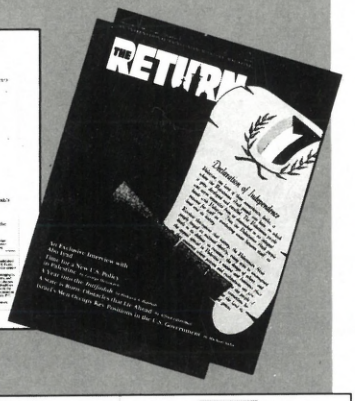

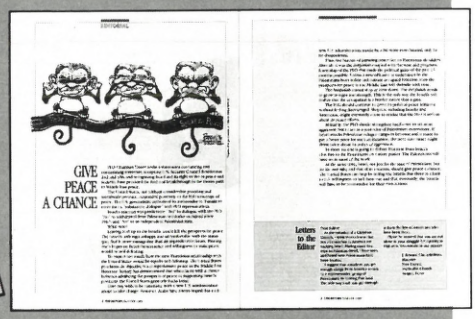

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